HUNTER×HUNTER

ハンター ハンター

37

Story & Art by
YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI

IT'S LIKE IT NEVER ENDS.
SKRITCH
SKRITCH
SKRITCH

冨樫義博

I gave up and it ended there.

Yoshihiro Togashi

Yoshihiro Togashi's manga career began in 1986 at the age of 20, when he won the coveted Osamu Tezuka Award for new manga artists. He debuted in the Japanese **Weekly Shonen Jump** magazine in 1989 with the romantic comedy **Tende Shôwaru Cupid**. From 1990 to 1994 he wrote and drew the hit manga **YuYu Hakusho**, which was followed by the dark comedy science-fiction series **Level E**, and finally this adventure series, **Hunter x Hunter**, available from VIZ Media's SHONEN JUMP imprint. In 1999 he married the manga artist Naoko Takeuchi.

HUNTER X HUNTER Volume 37
SHONEN JUMP Edition

STORY AND ART BY
YOSHIHIRO TOGASHI

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Graphic Novel Editor/Shaenon K. Garrity

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
HUNTER X HUNTER is rated T+ for Older Teen and is recommended for ages 16 and up. It contains realistic violence and mature language.

SHONEN JUMP

SHONEN JUMP MANGA

HUNTER × HUNTER

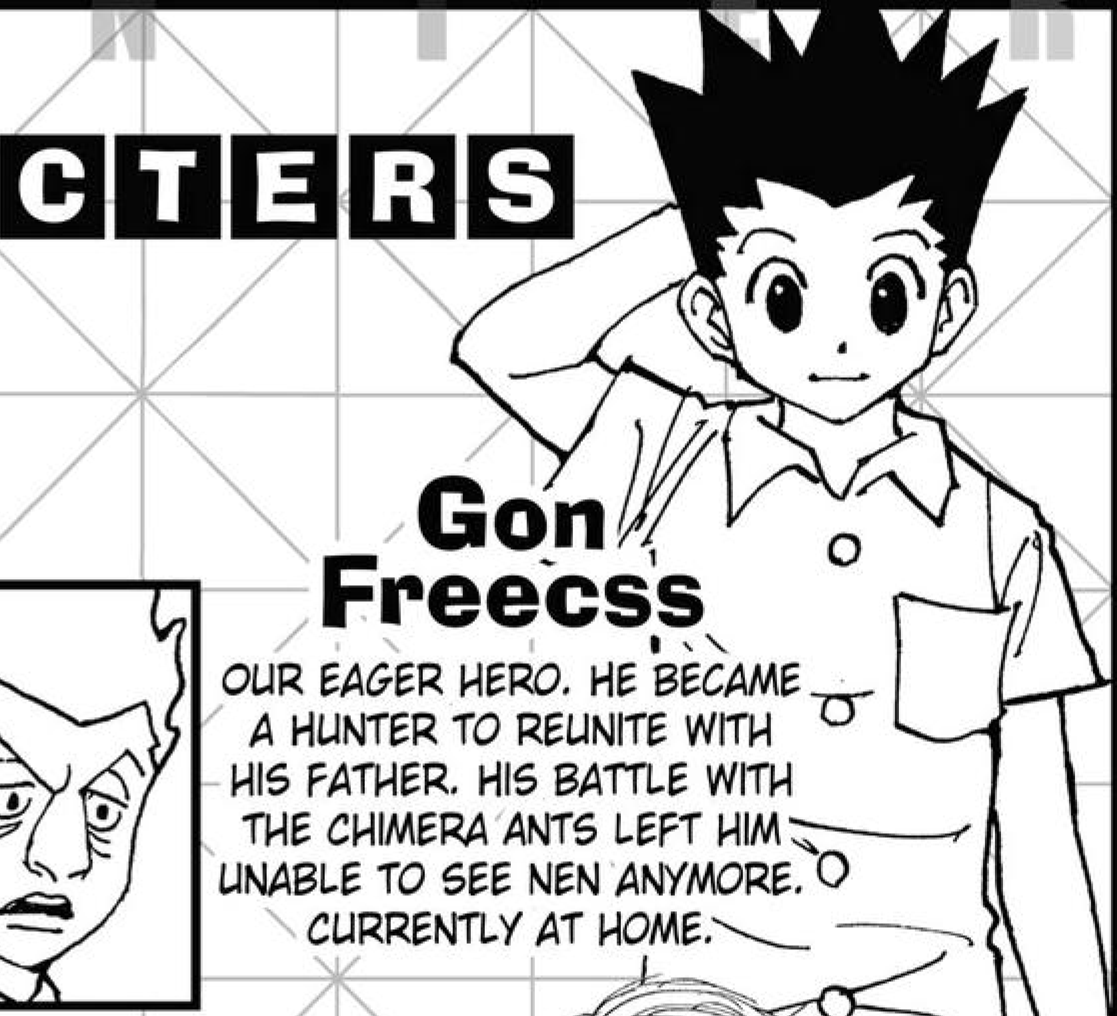
ハンター ハンター

Story & Art by

Yoshihiro Togashi

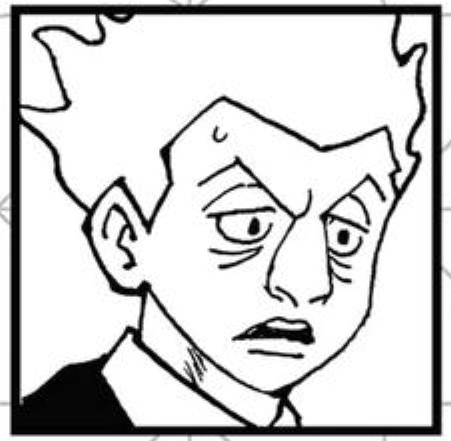
Volume 37

CHARACTERS



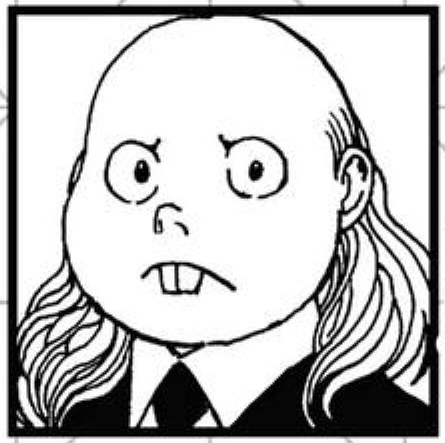
Gon Freecss

OUR EAGER HERO. HE BECAME A HUNTER TO REUNITE WITH HIS FATHER. HIS BATTLE WITH THE CHIMERA ANTS LEFT HIM UNABLE TO SEE NEN ANYMORE. CURRENTLY AT HOME.



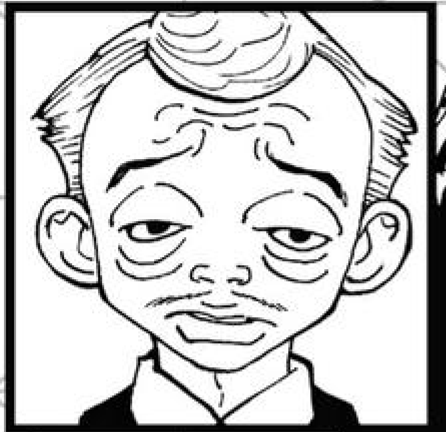
Bill

A HUNTER HIRED AS THE PRINCE'S BODYGUARD THROUGH PARISTON. NOW WORKING WITH KURAPIKA.



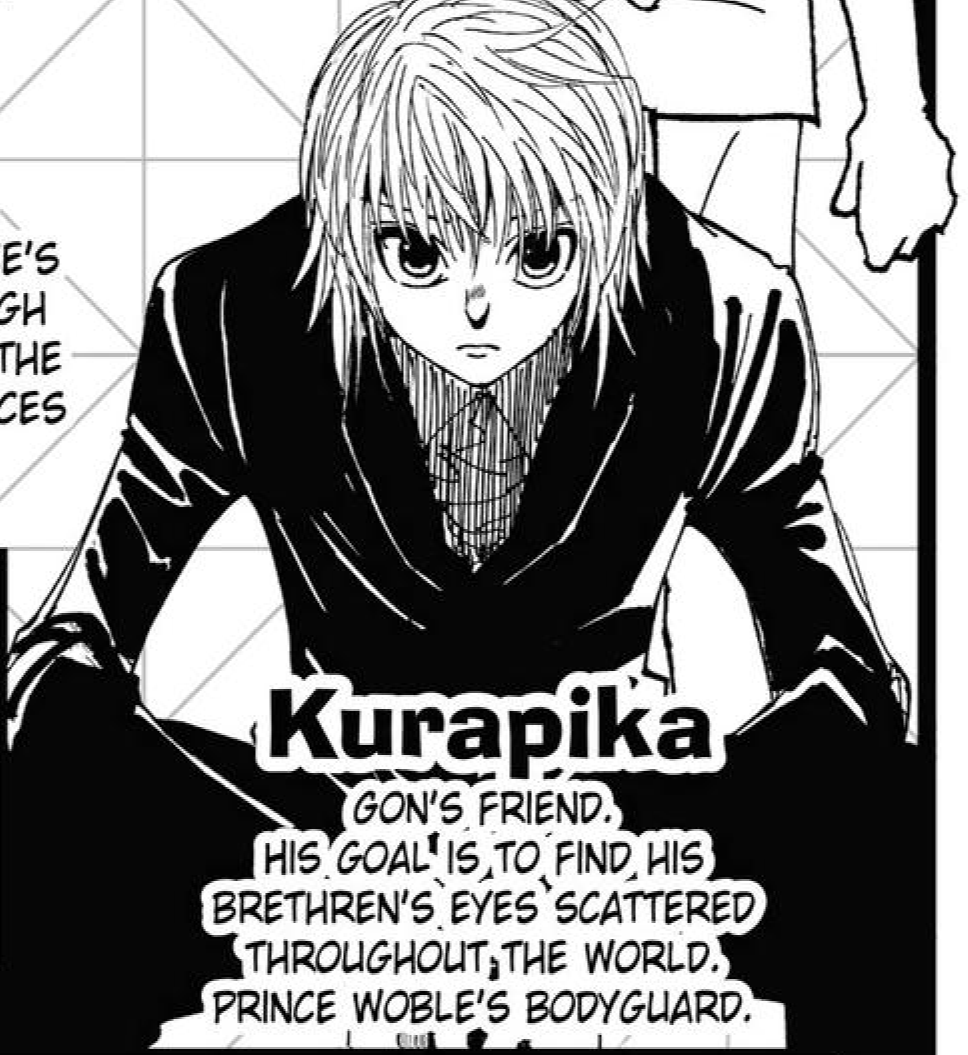
Melody

A HUNTER HIRED AS THE TENTH PRINCE'S BODYGUARD THROUGH KURAPIKA. HELPING THE TENTH AND 11TH PRINCES TO ESCAPE.



Keeney

A HUNTER GUARDING THE TENTH PRINCE WITH MELODY.

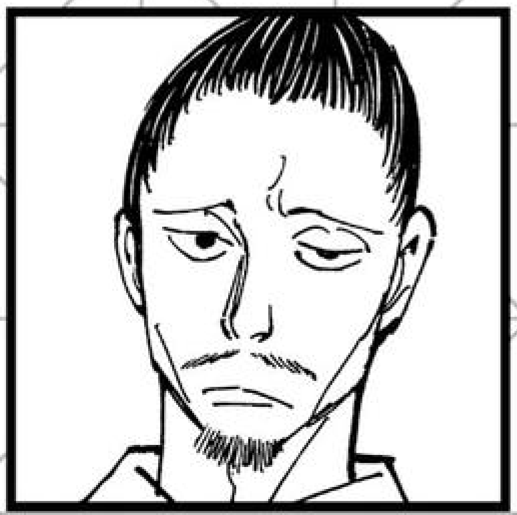


Kurapika

GON'S FRIEND. HIS GOAL IS TO FIND HIS BRETHREN'S EYES SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. PRINCE WOBLE'S BODYGUARD.

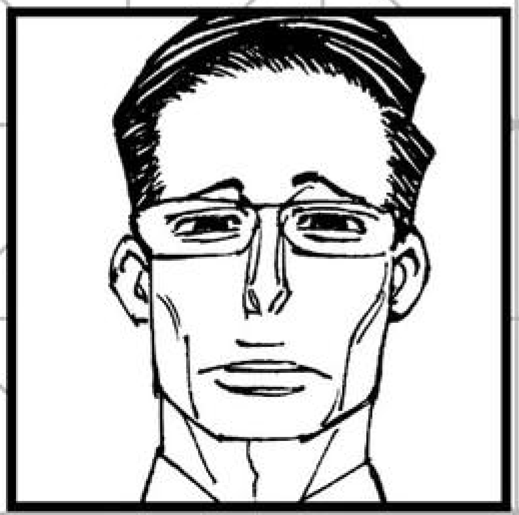
The Story Thus Far

GON DREAMS OF BEING A HUNTER LIKE THE FATHER HE HARDLY REMEMBERS, THE GREAT GING FREECSS. HE REUNITES WITH GING'S OLD FRIEND KITE AND ENCOUNTERS THE CHIMERA ANTS. THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION SENDS OUR HEROES TO STORM THE PALACE IN E. GORTEAU TO DEFEAT THE ANTS. MANKIND IS VICTORIOUS, BUT AT THE COST OF HUNTER ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN NETERO'S LIFE. AN ELECTION IS HELD TO PICK THE NEXT CHAIRMAN, AND CHEEDLE OF THE ZODIACS IS PICKED. GON, CRITICALLY WOUNDED, IS HEALED BY ALLUKA, KILLUA'S SISTER. NETERO'S SON, BEYOND, ANNOUNCES A VOYAGE TO THE DARK CONTINENT TO THE ENTIRE WORLD. ONBOARD THE SHIP, THE BATTLE FOR THE THRONE OF THE KAKIN KINGDOM IS UNDERWAY. KURAPIKA IS HIRED AS A BODYGUARD TO THE 14TH KAKIN PRINCE, BUT SOON AFTER DEPARTURE, THE ROSTER OF BODYGUARDS IS DOWN TO ONLY KURAPIKA AND BILL. IN THE LOWER TIERS, WHERE THE MAFIA RULES, THE PHANTOM TROUPE IS ON THE MOVE TO KILL HISOKA...



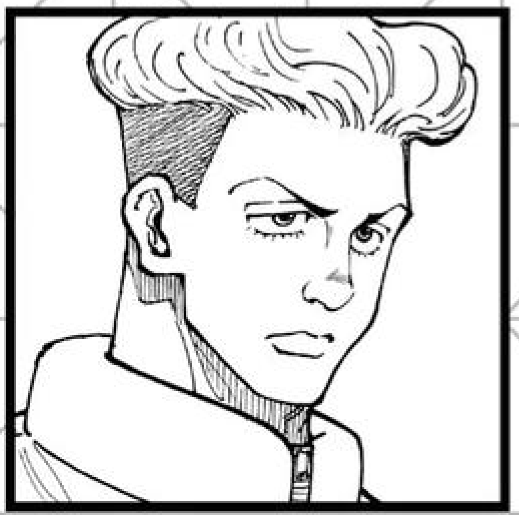
Nobunaga

A MEMBER OF THE PHANTOM TROUPE. ON BOARD TO KILL HISOKA AND NOW HELPING CHA-R.



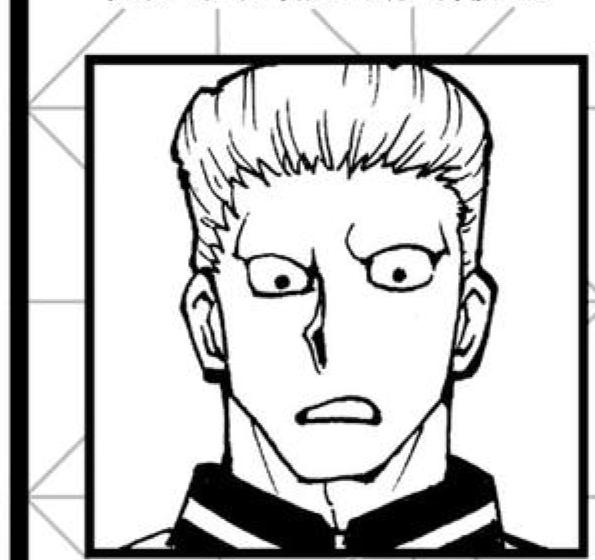
Ken'i Wang

CHA-R UNDERBOSS. TRYING TO FIND HISOKA BEFORE THE TROUPE.



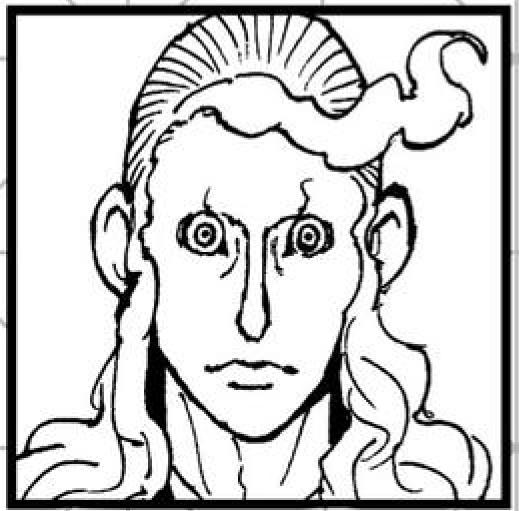
Babimyna

THE FIRST PRINCE'S PRIVATE BODYGUARD. CURRENTLY GUARDING PRINCE WOBLE IN PLACE OF VINCENT, WHO ATTACKED KURAPIKA.



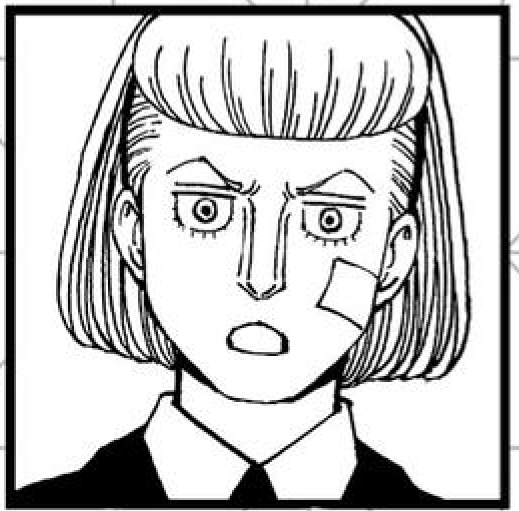
Phinks

A MEMBER OF THE PHANTOM TROUPE. SEARCHING FOR HISOKA ON TIER 5 WITH NOBUNAGA AND FEITAN.



Hinrigh Biganduffno

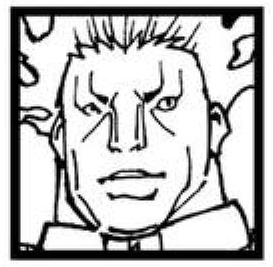
XI-YU UNDERBOSS. ALSO SEARCHING FOR HISOKA.



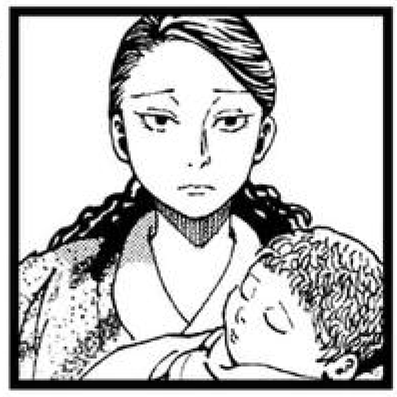
Theta

A HUNTER GUARDING THE FOURTH PRINCE. PLOTTING HIS ASSASSINATION WHILE TEACHING HIM NEN.

Kakin Princes



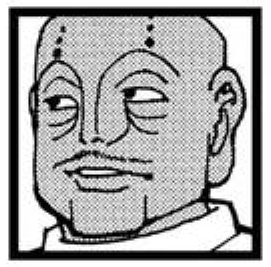
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN



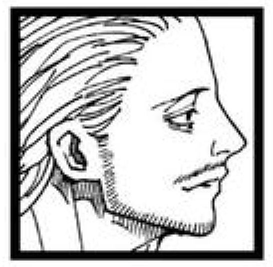
Prince Woble and Oito

THE 14TH PRINCE OF KAKIN AND HER MOTHER. KURAPIKA'S CLIENTS.

SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA

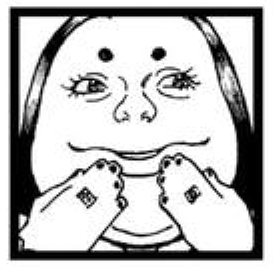


THIRD PRINCE ZHANGLEI



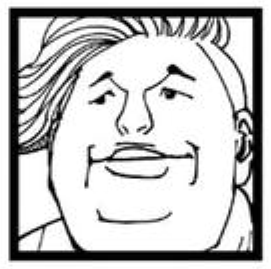
FOURTH PRINCE TSERRIEDNICH

FIFTH PRINCE TUBEPPA



SIXTH PRINCE TYSON

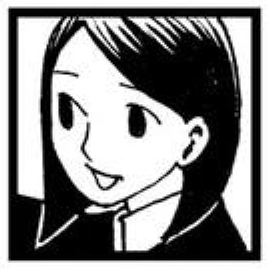
SEVENTH PRINCE LUZURUS



EIGHTH PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ

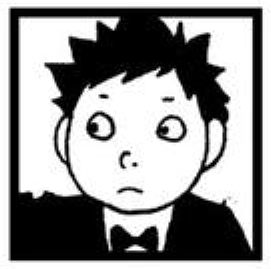
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG

TENTH PRINCE KACHO



11TH PRINCE FUGETSU

12TH PRINCE MOMOZE



13TH PRINCE MARAYAM

HUNTER×HUNTER

Volume 37

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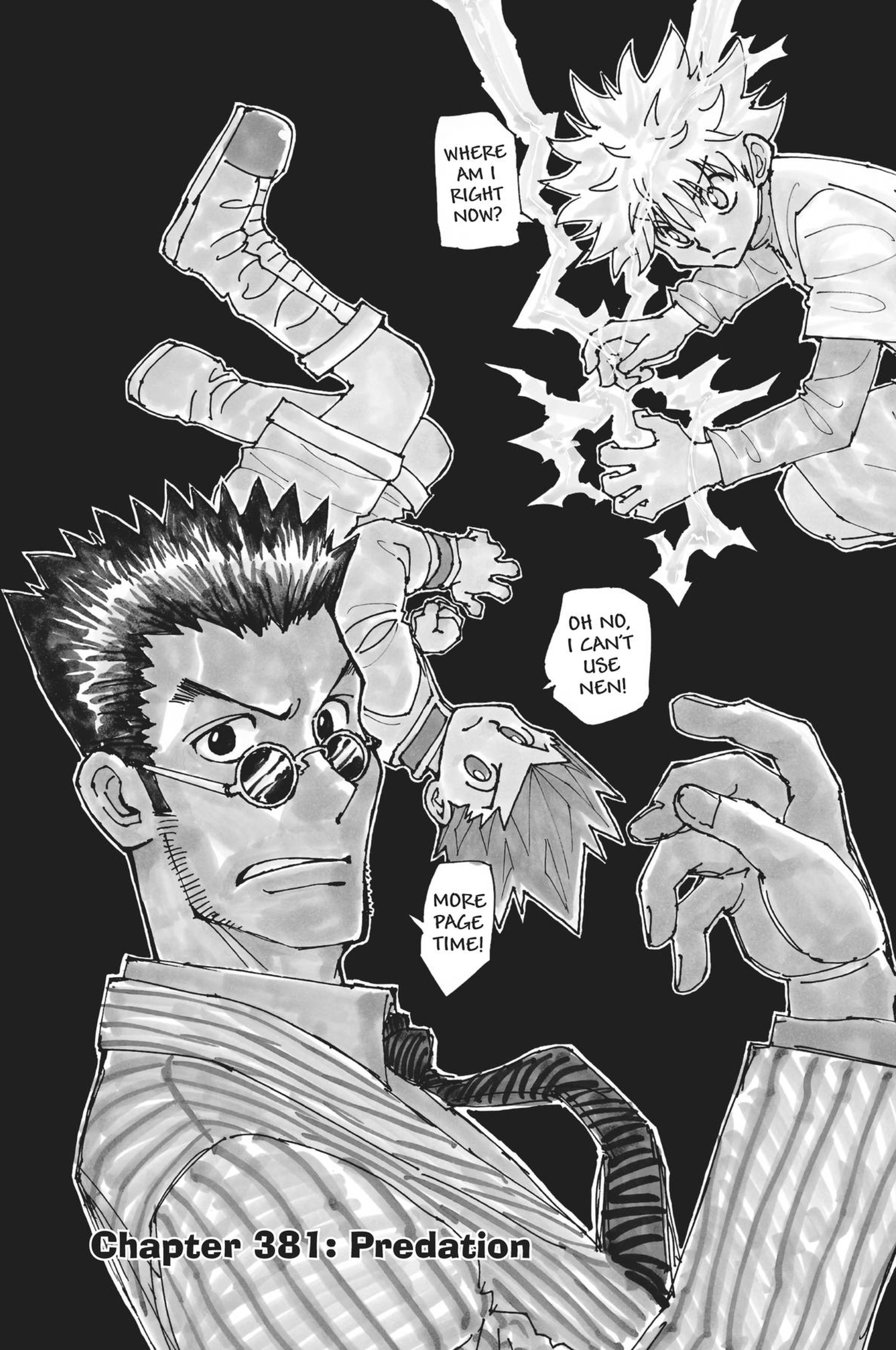
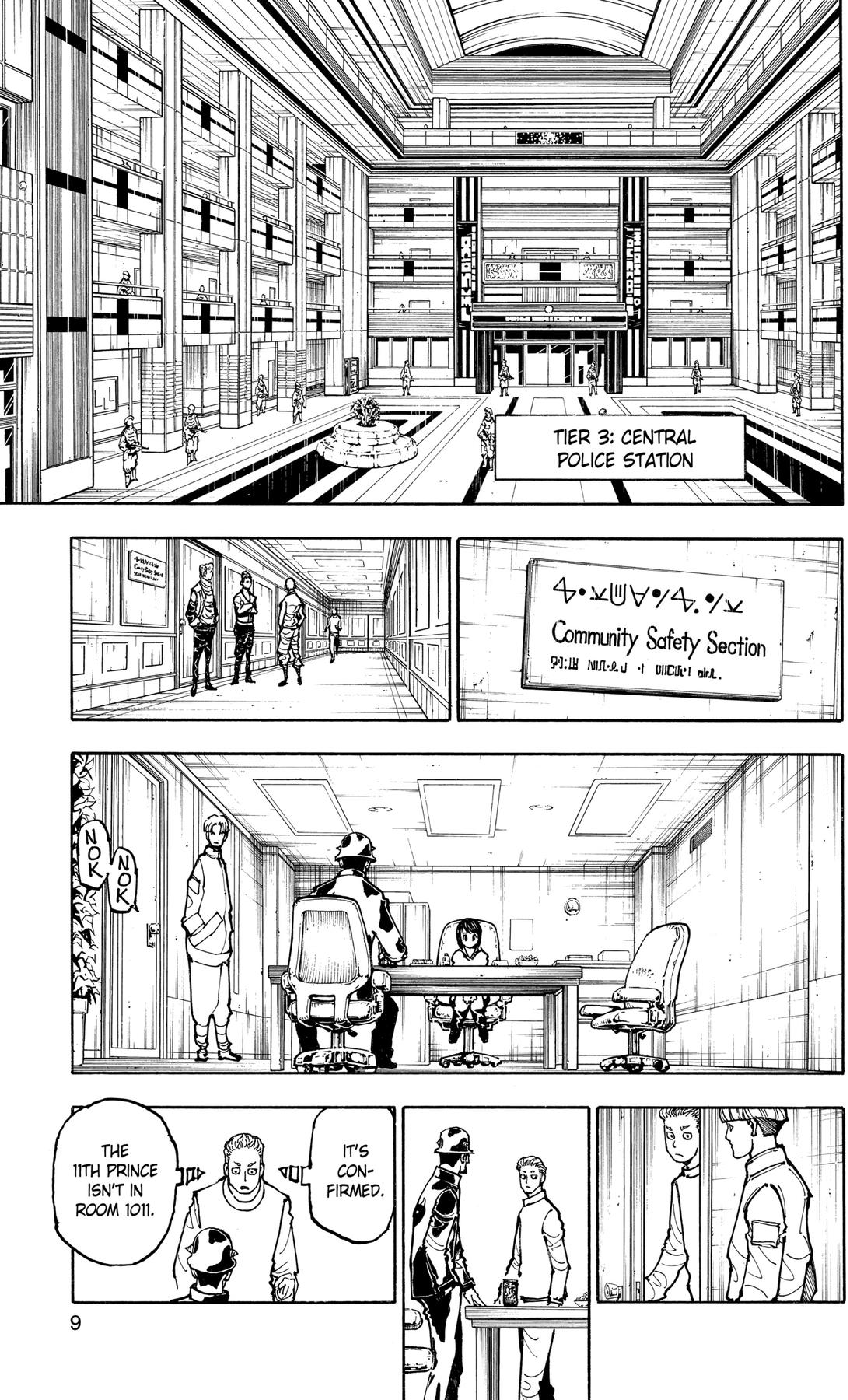
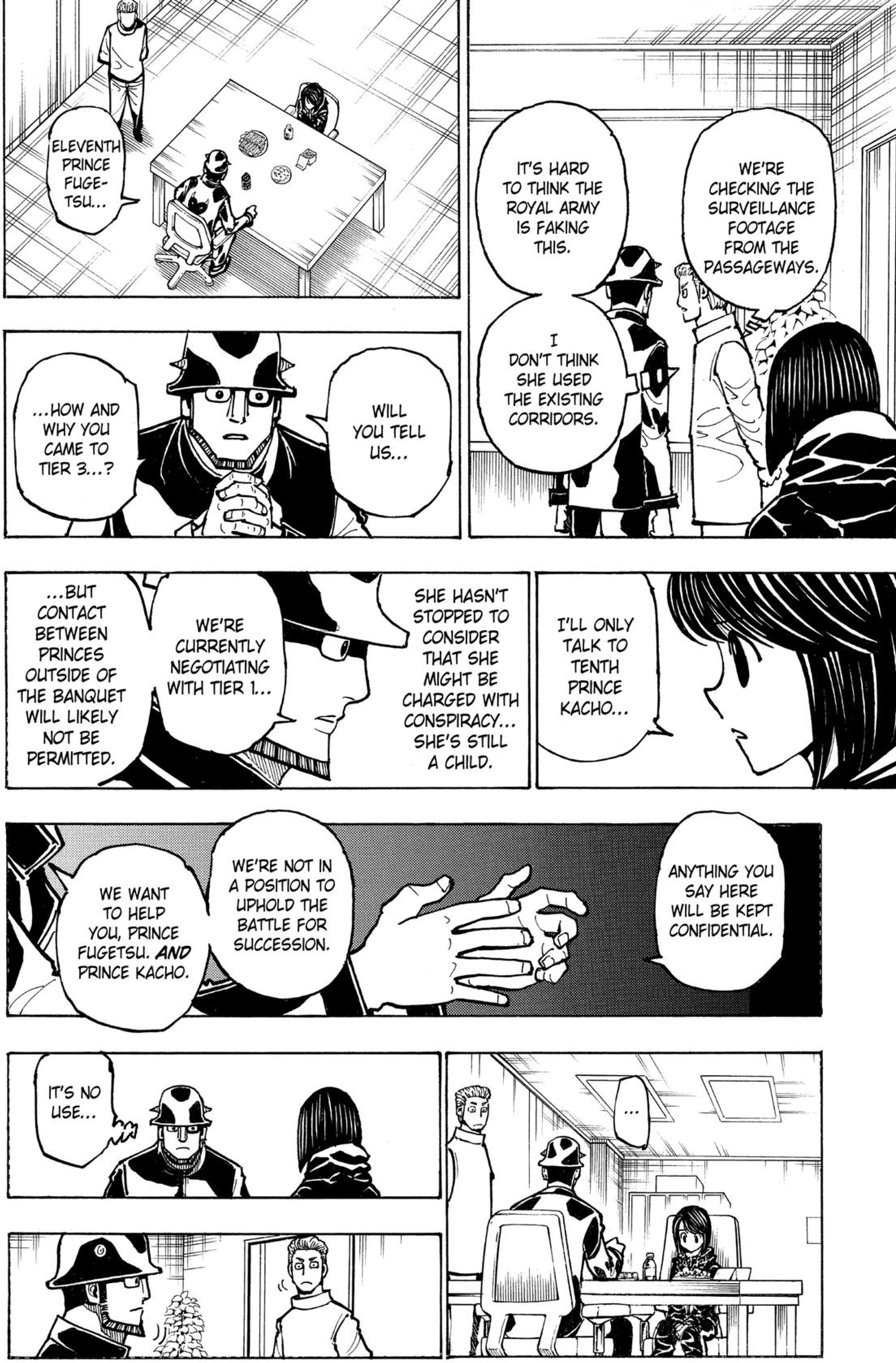
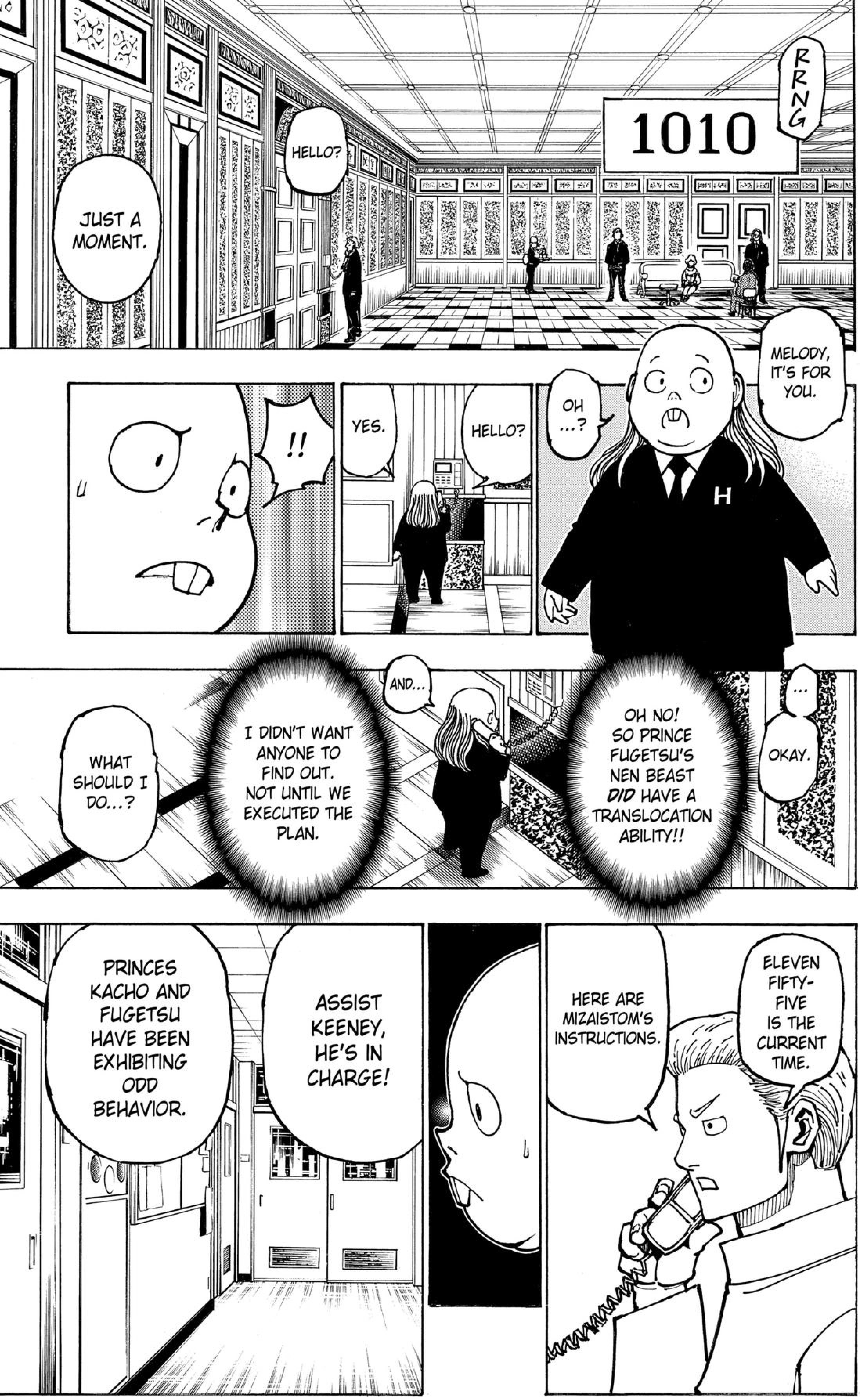
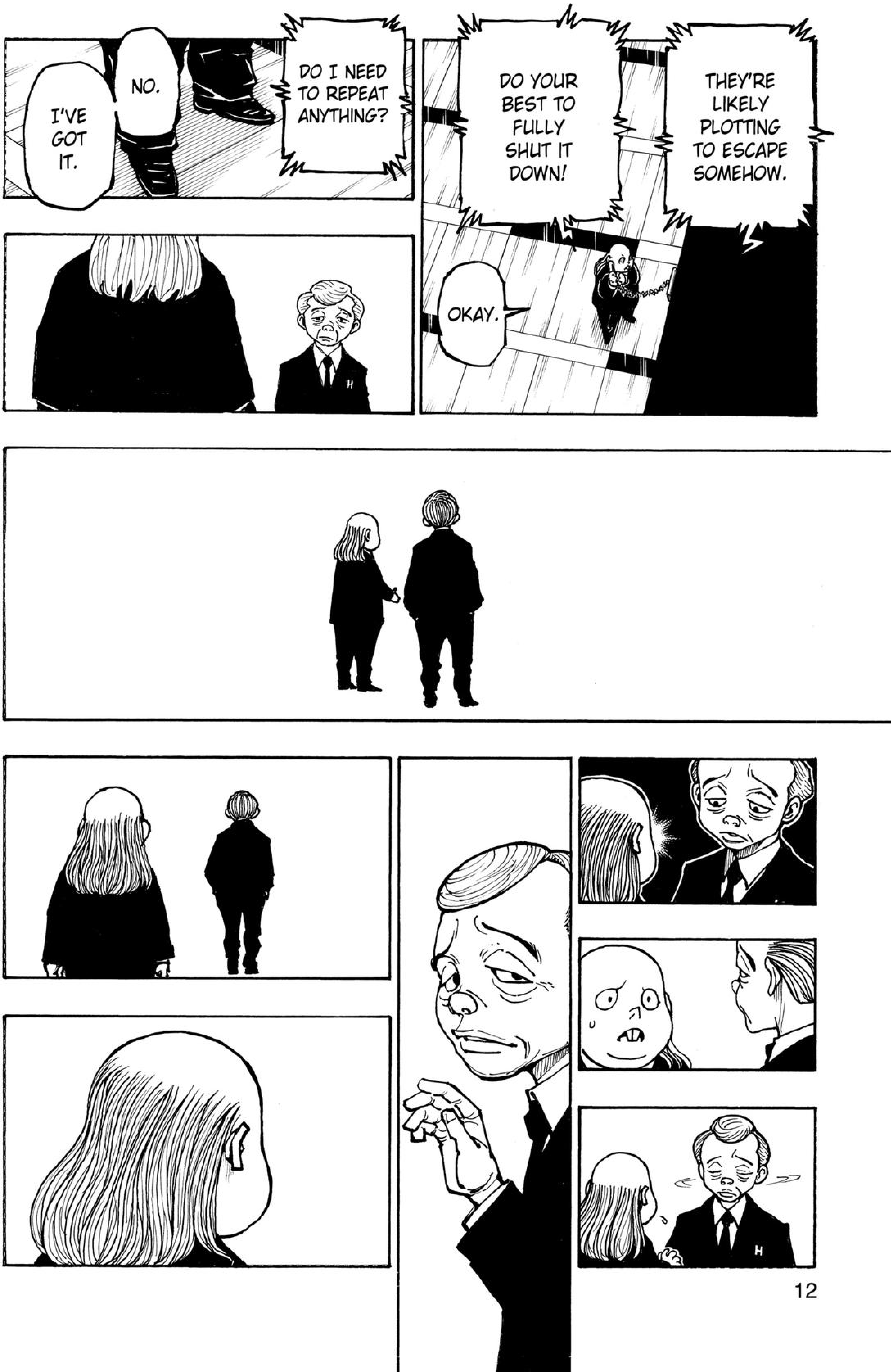
Chapter 381: Predation

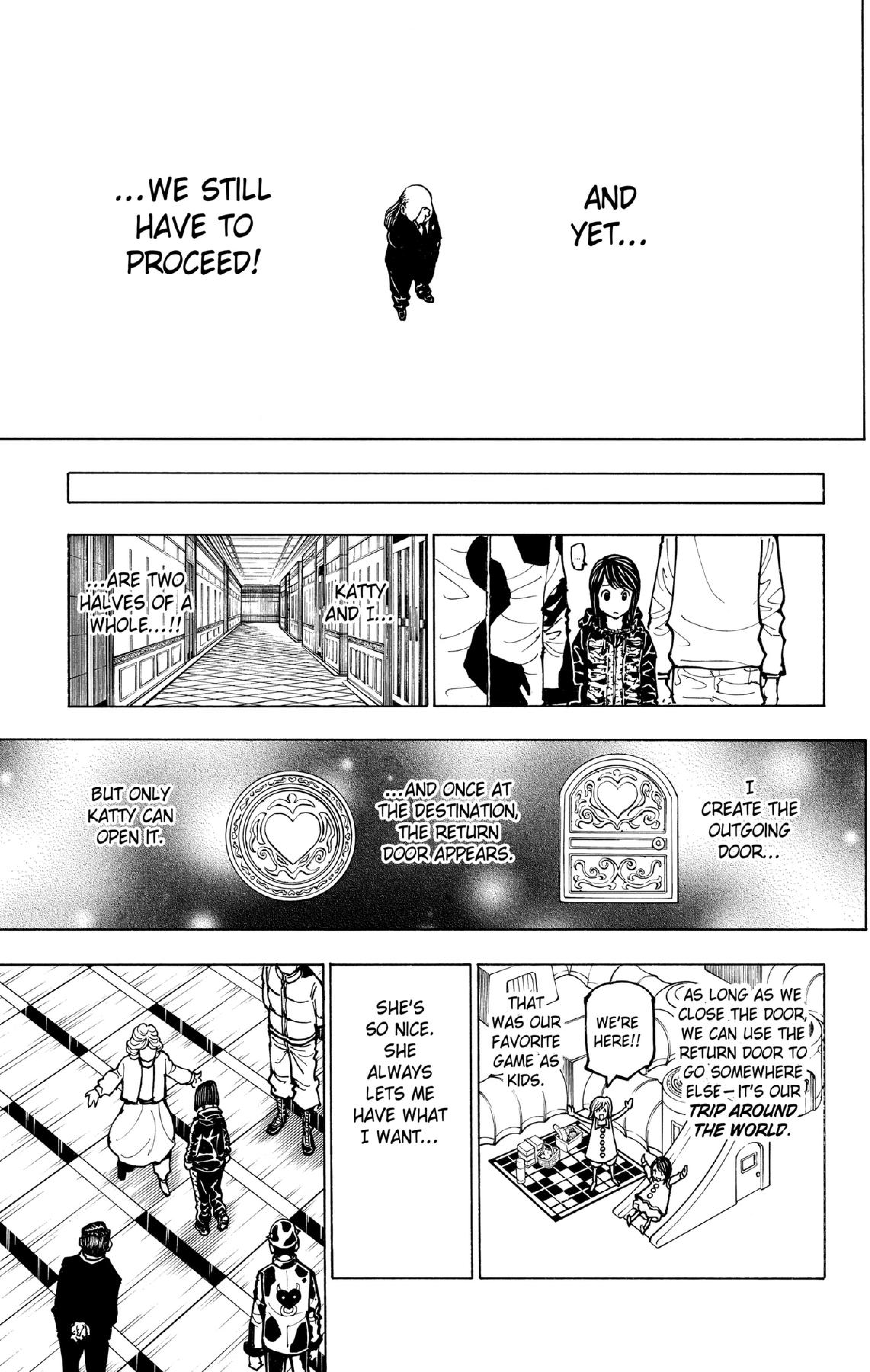

WHERE AM I RIGHT NOW?
OH NO, I CAN'T USE NEN!
MORE PAGE TIME!

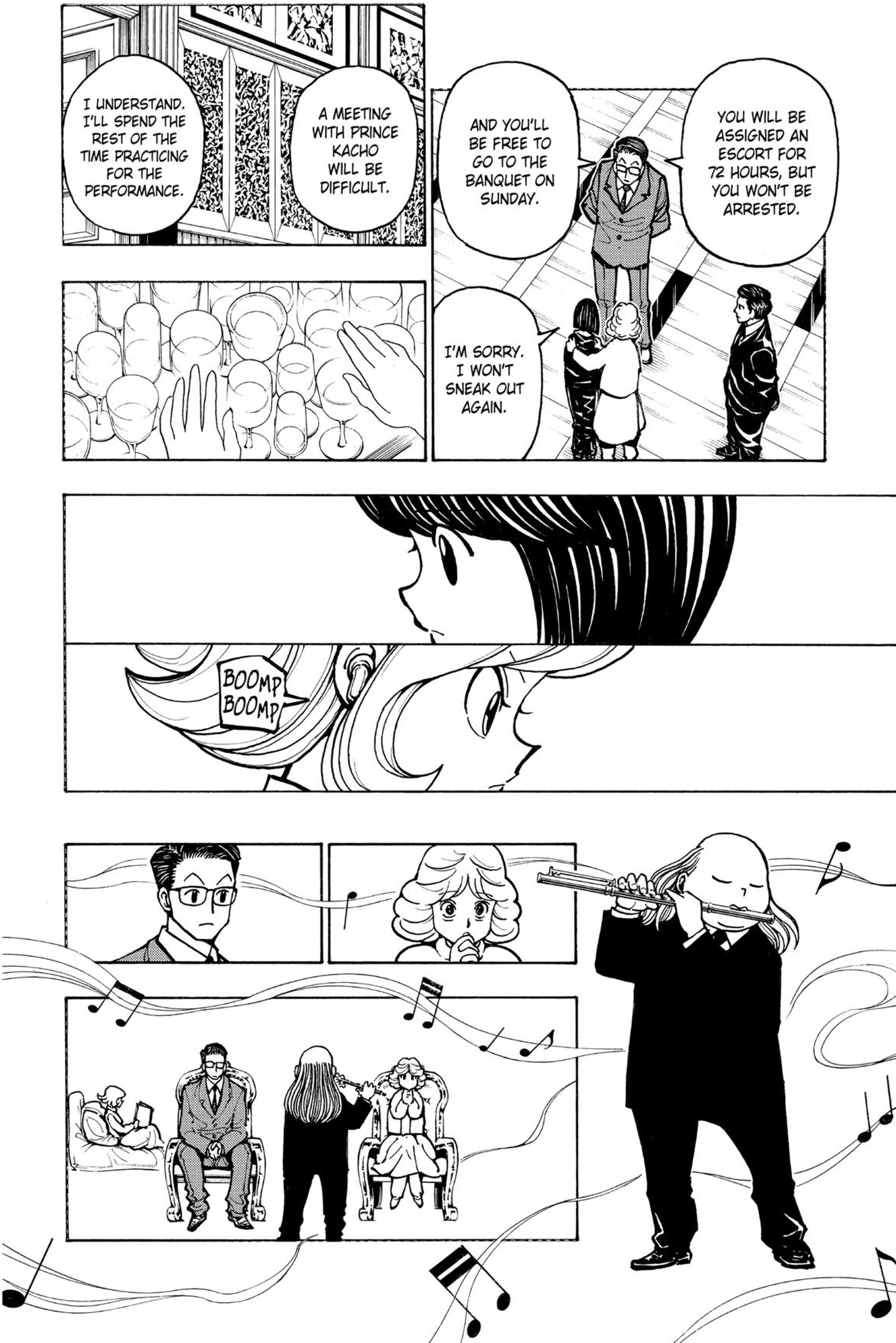

TIER 3: CENTRAL POLICE STATION
Community Safety Section
NOK
NOK
IT'S CONFIRMED.
THE 11TH PRINCE ISN'T IN ROOM 1011.

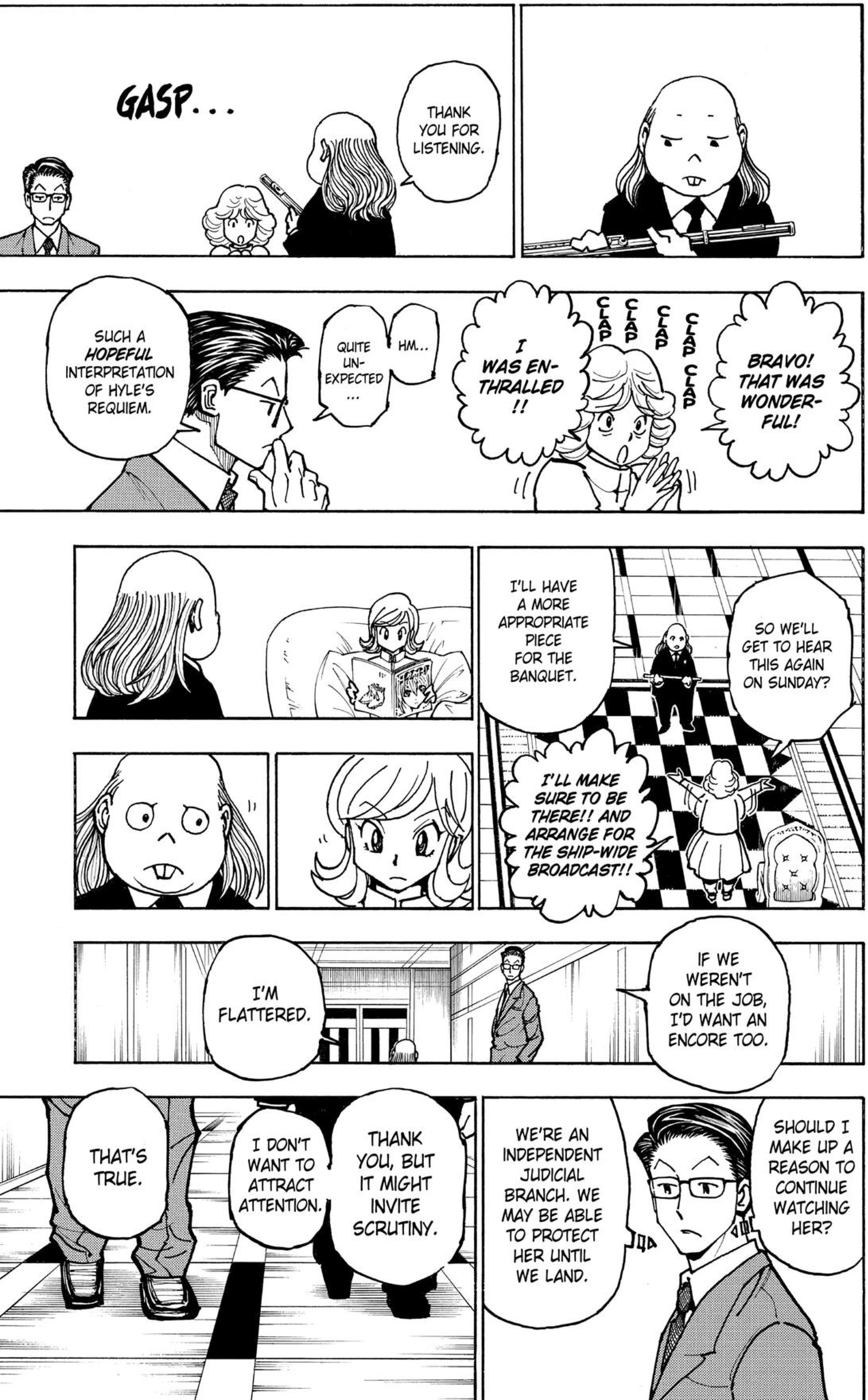

WE'RE CHECKING THE SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE FROM THE PASSAGEWAYS.
IT'S HARD TO THINK THE ROYAL ARMY IS FAKING THIS.
I DON'T THINK SHE USED THE EXISTING CORRIDORS.
ELEVENTH PRINCE FUGETSU…
WILL YOU TELL US…
…HOW AND WHY YOU CAME TO TIER 3…?
I'LL ONLY TALK TO TENTH PRINCE KACHO…
SHE HASN'T STOPPED TO CONSIDER THAT SHE MIGHT BE CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY… SHE'S STILL A CHILD.
WE'RE CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING WITH TIER 1…
…BUT CONTACT BETWEEN PRINCES OUTSIDE OF THE BANQUET WILL LIKELY NOT BE PERMITTED.
ANYTHING YOU SAY HERE WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.
WE'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO UPHOLD THE BATTLE FOR SUCCESSION.
WE WANT TO HELP YOU, PRINCE FUGETSU. *AND* PRINCE KACHO.
…
IT'S NO USE…

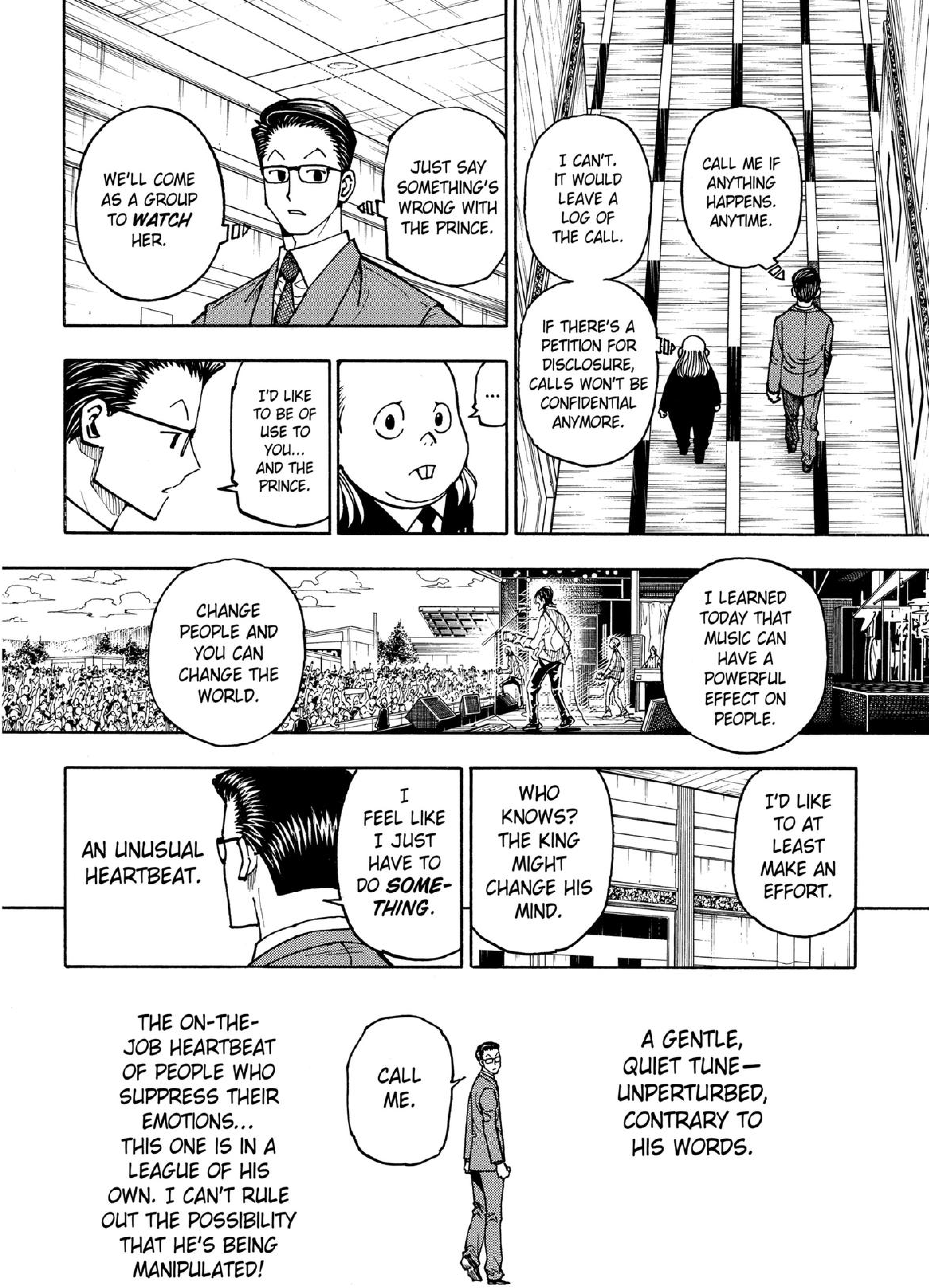

RRNG
1010
HELLO?
JUST A MOMENT.
MELODY, IT'S FOR YOU.
OH ...?
HELLO?
YES.
!!
...
OKAY.
OH NO! SO PRINCE FUGETSU'S NEN BEAST *DID* HAVE A TRANSLOCATION ABILITY!!
AND...
I DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO FIND OUT. NOT UNTIL WE EXECUTED THE PLAN.
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?
ELEVEN FIFTY-FIVE IS THE CURRENT TIME.
HERE ARE MIZAISTOM'S INSTRUCTIONS.
ASSIST KEENEY, HE'S IN CHARGE!
PRINCES KACHO AND FUGETSU HAVE BEEN EXHIBITING ODD BEHAVIOR.

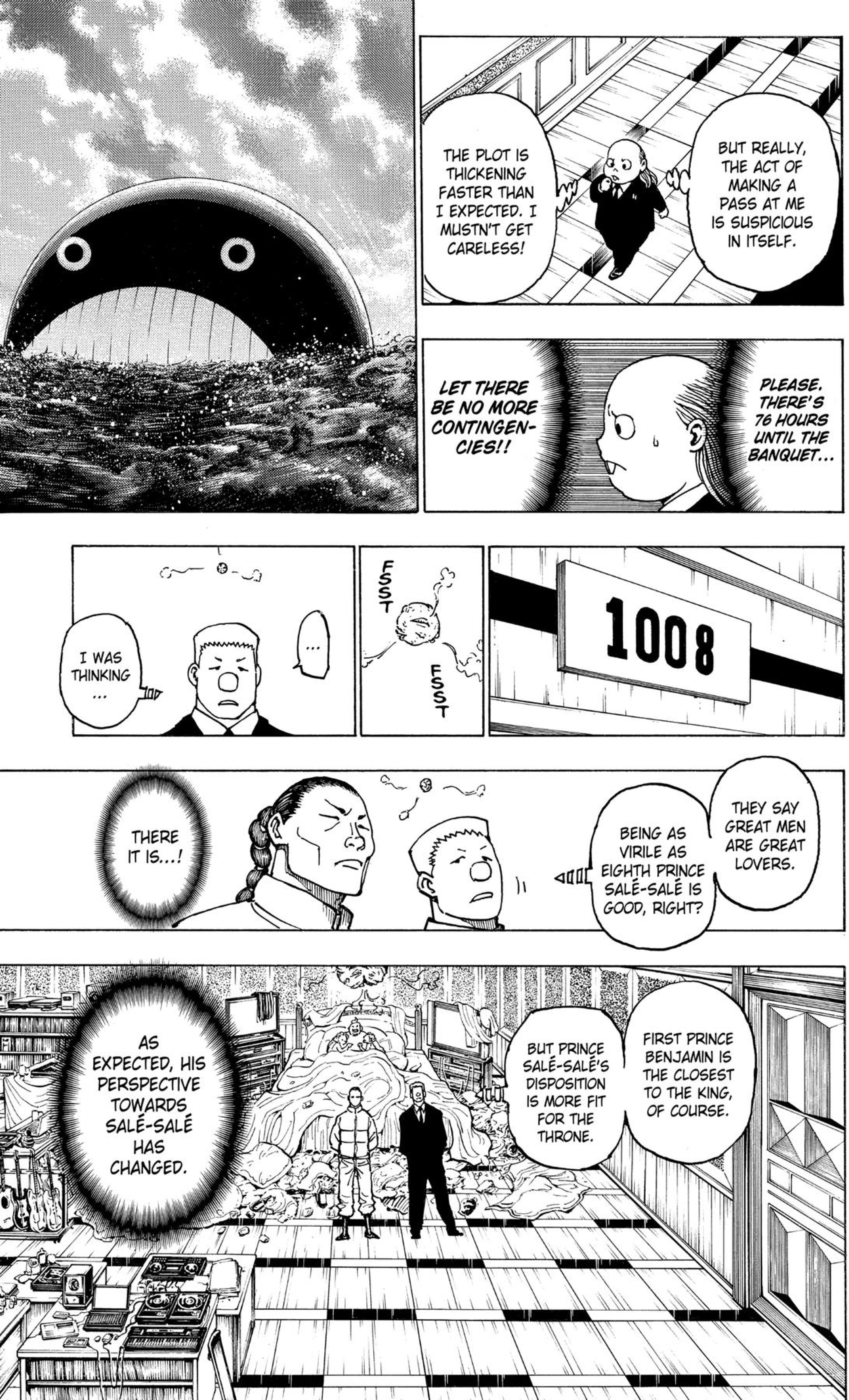

THEY'RE LIKELY PLOTTING TO ESCAPE SOMEHOW.
DO YOUR BEST TO FULLY SHUT IT DOWN!
OKAY.
DO I NEED TO REPEAT ANYTHING?
NO.
I'VE GOT IT.

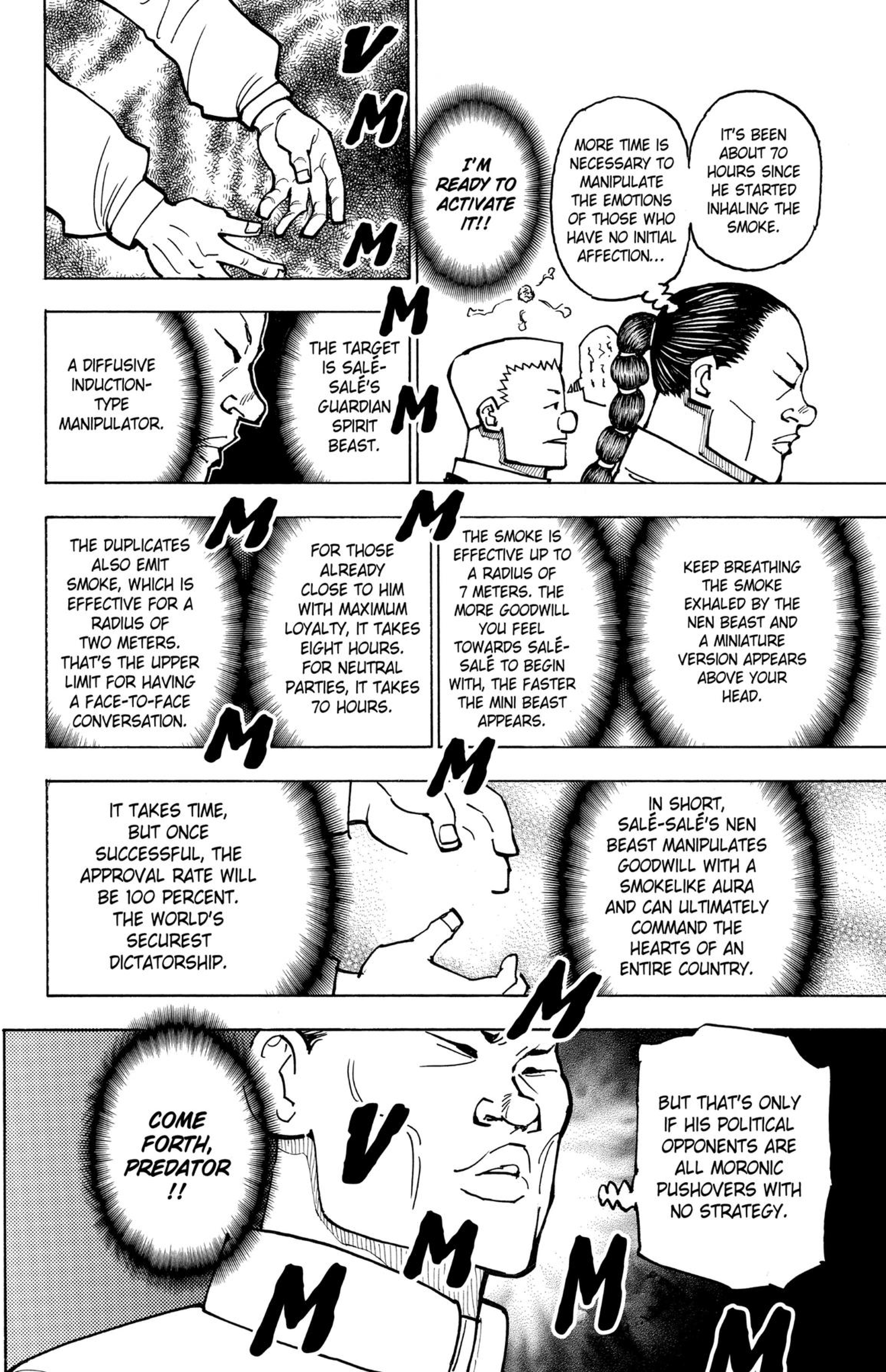

AND YET...
...WE STILL HAVE TO PROCEED!
...
KATTY AND I...
...ARE TWO HALVES OF A WHOLE...!!
I CREATE THE OUTGOING DOOR...
...AND ONCE AT THE DESTINATION, THE RETURN DOOR APPEARS.
BUT ONLY KATTY CAN OPEN IT.
AS LONG AS WE CLOSE THE DOOR, WE CAN USE THE RETURN DOOR TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE — IT'S OUR ***TRIP AROUND THE WORLD***.
WE'RE HERE!!
THAT WAS OUR FAVORITE GAME AS KIDS.
SHE'S SO NICE. SHE ALWAYS LETS ME HAVE WHAT I WANT...

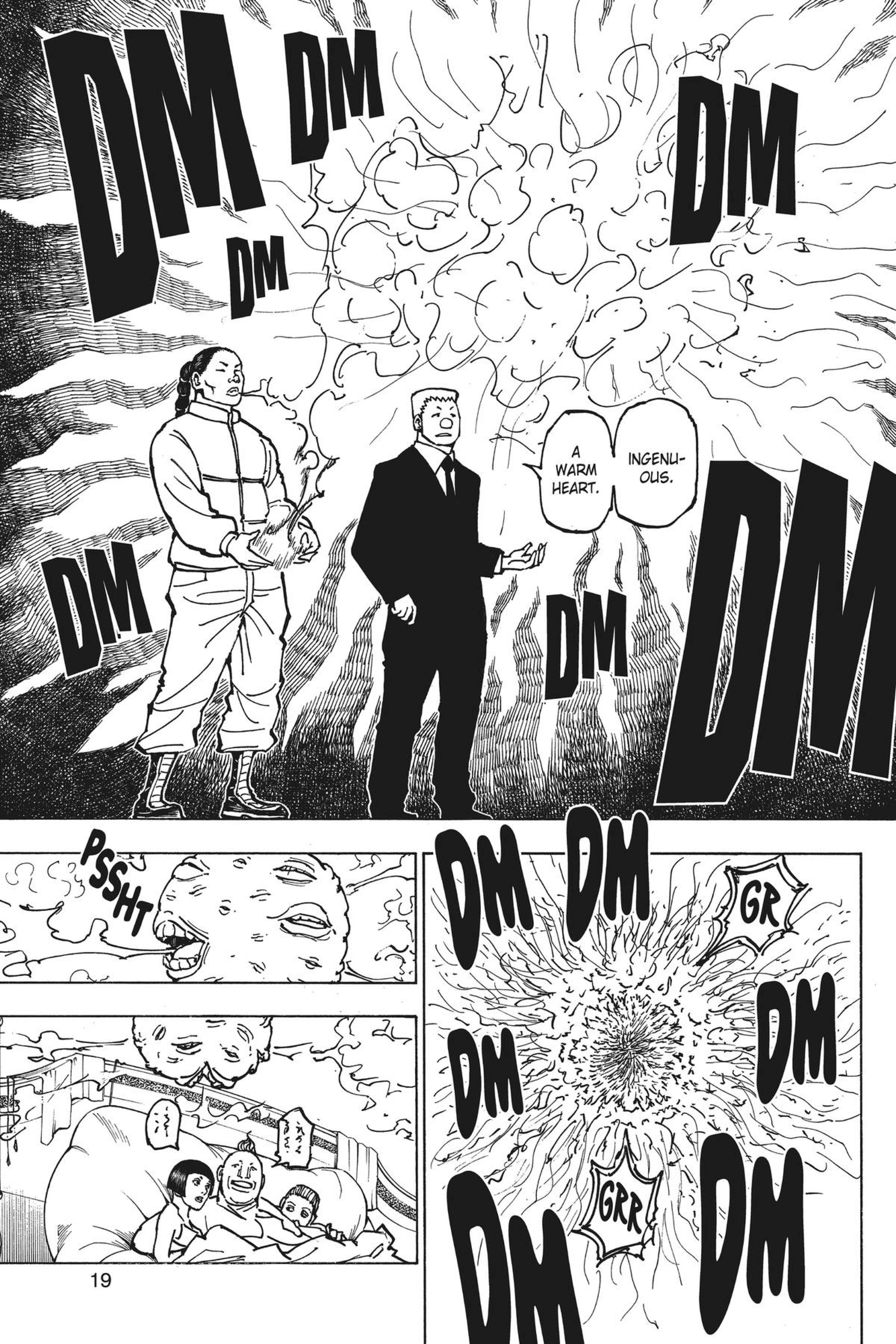

YOU WILL BE ASSIGNED AN ESCORT FOR 72 HOURS, BUT YOU WON'T BE ARRESTED.
AND YOU'LL BE FREE TO GO TO THE BANQUET ON SUNDAY.
I'M SORRY. I WON'T SNEAK OUT AGAIN.
A MEETING WITH PRINCE KACHO WILL BE DIFFICULT.
I UNDERSTAND. I'LL SPEND THE REST OF THE TIME PRACTICING FOR THE PERFORMANCE.
BOOMP BOOMP

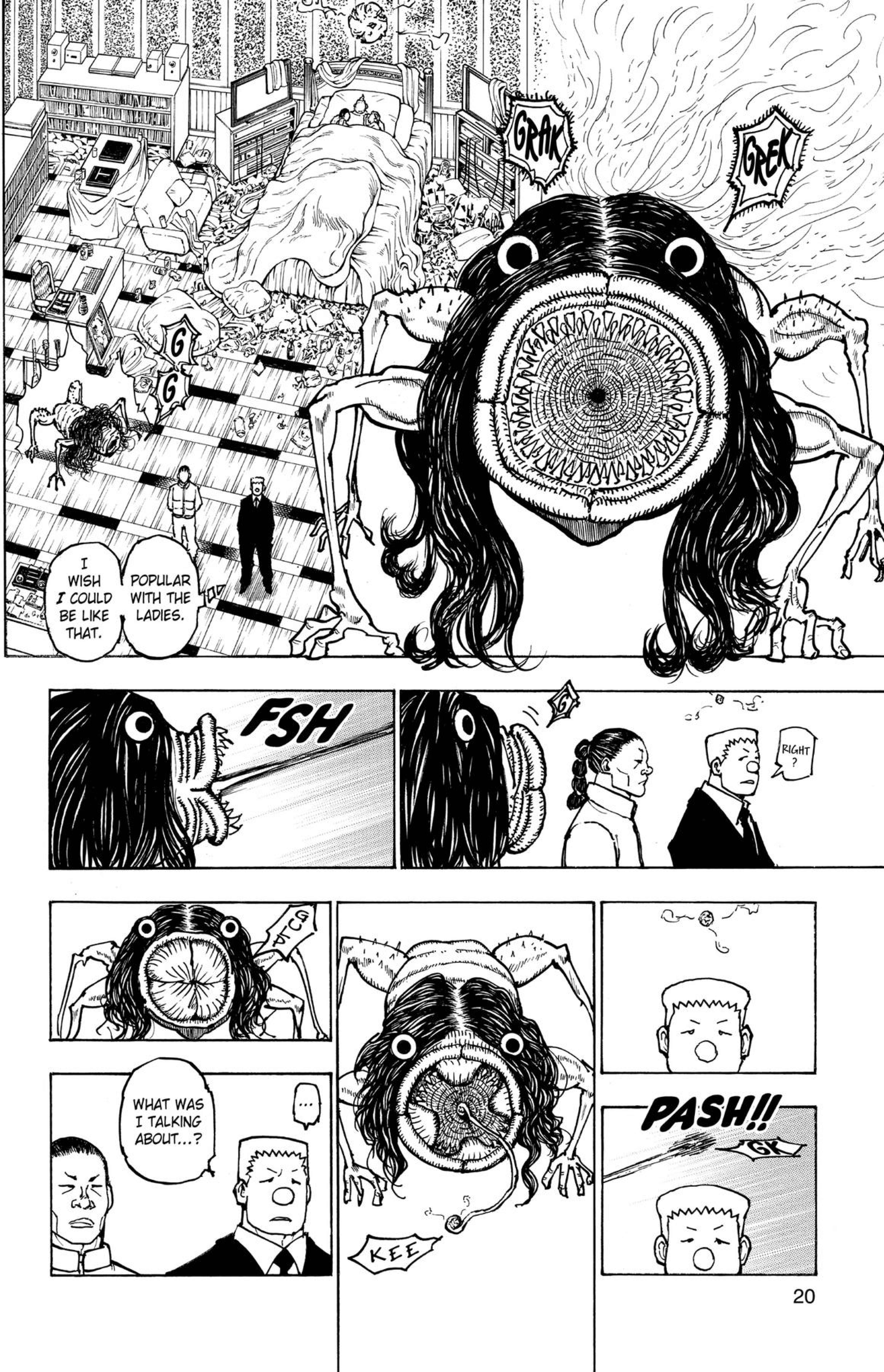

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.
GASP...
BRAVO! THAT WAS WONDERFUL!
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
I WAS ENTHRALLED!!
HM...
QUITE UNEXPECTED...
SUCH A HOPEFUL INTERPRETATION OF HYLE'S REQUIEM.
SO WE'LL GET TO HEAR THIS AGAIN ON SUNDAY?
I'LL HAVE A MORE APPROPRIATE PIECE FOR THE BANQUET.
I'LL MAKE SURE TO BE THERE!! AND ARRANGE FOR THE SHIP-WIDE BROADCAST!!
IF WE WEREN'T ON THE JOB, I'D WANT AN ENCORE TOO.
I'M FLATTERED.
SHOULD I MAKE UP A REASON TO CONTINUE WATCHING HER?
WE'RE AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL BRANCH. WE MAY BE ABLE TO PROTECT HER UNTIL WE LAND.
THANK YOU, BUT IT MIGHT INVITE SCRUTINY.
I DON'T WANT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION.
THAT'S TRUE.

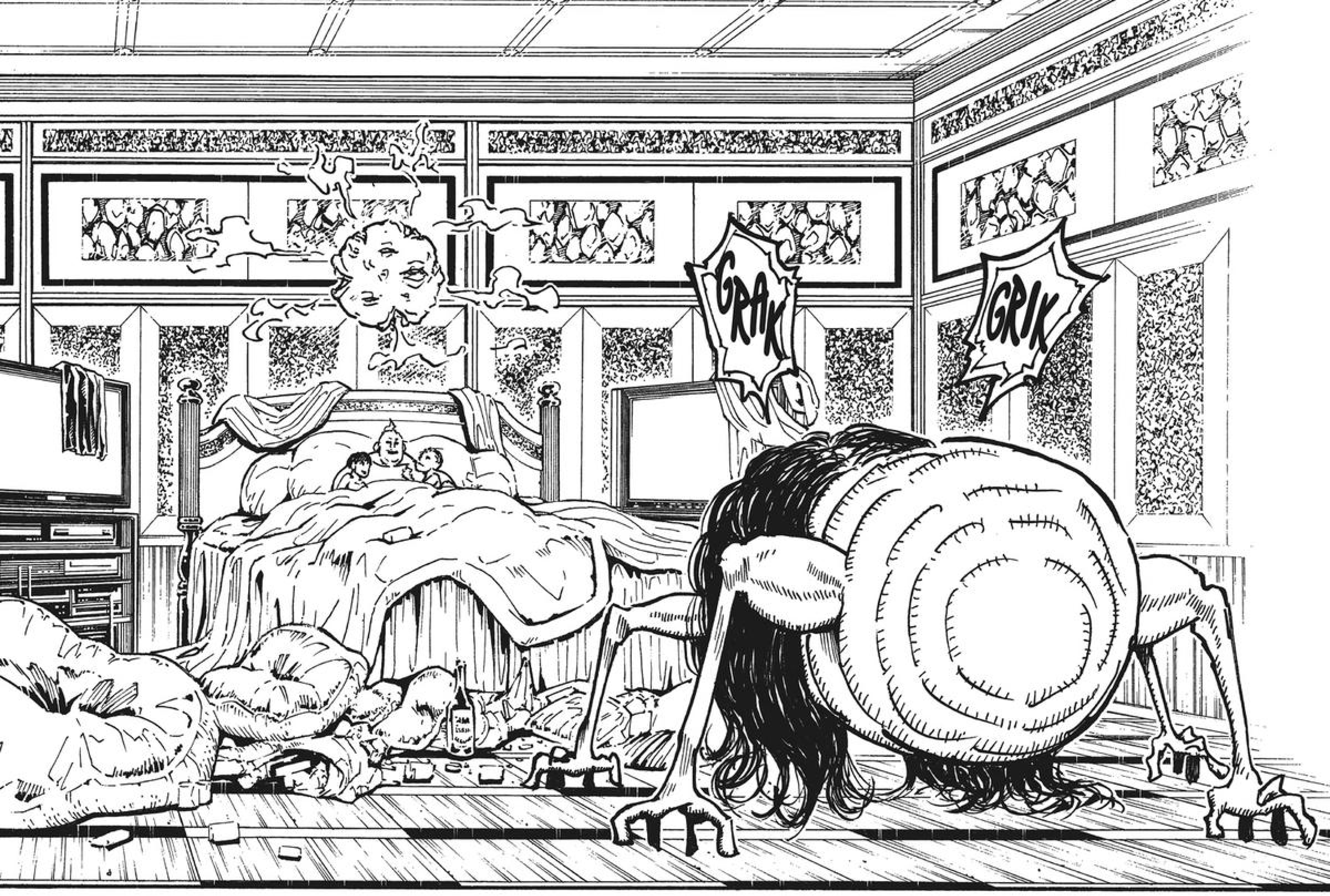

CALL ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS. ANYTIME.
I CAN'T. IT WOULD LEAVE A LOG OF THE CALL.
IF THERE'S A PETITION FOR DISCLOSURE, CALLS WON'T BE CONFIDENTIAL ANYMORE.
JUST SAY SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE PRINCE.
WE'LL COME AS A GROUP TO ***WATCH*** HER.
...
I'D LIKE TO BE OF USE TO YOU... AND THE PRINCE.
I LEARNED TODAY THAT MUSIC CAN HAVE A POWERFUL EFFECT ON PEOPLE.
CHANGE PEOPLE AND YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.
I'D LIKE TO AT LEAST MAKE AN EFFORT.
WHO KNOWS? THE KING MIGHT CHANGE HIS MIND.
I FEEL LIKE I JUST HAVE TO DO ***SOMETHING***.
AN UNUSUAL HEARTBEAT.
A GENTLE, QUIET TUNE— UNPERTURBED, CONTRARY TO HIS WORDS.
CALL ME.
THE ON-THE-JOB HEARTBEAT OF PEOPLE WHO SUPPRESS THEIR EMOTIONS... THIS ONE IS IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN. I CAN'T RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE'S BEING MANIPULATED!

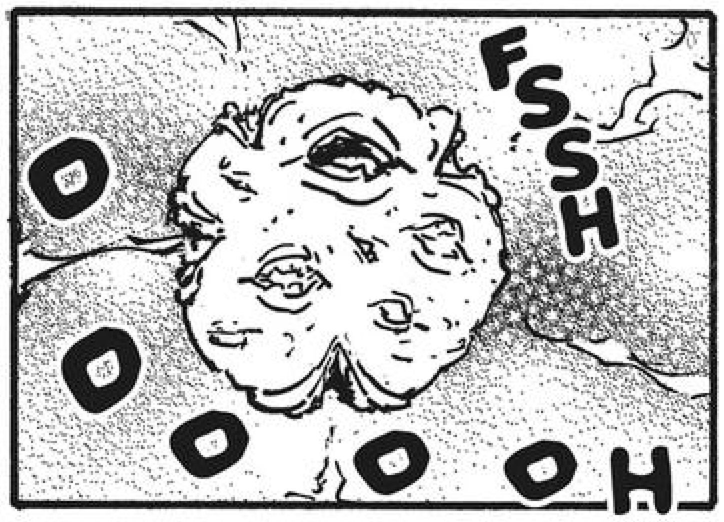

BUT REALLY, THE ACT OF MAKING A PASS AT ME IS SUSPICIOUS IN ITSELF.
THE PLOT IS THICKENING FASTER THAN I EXPECTED. I MUSTN'T GET CARELESS!
PLEASE. THERE'S 76 HOURS UNTIL THE BANQUET...
LET THERE BE NO MORE CONTINGENCIES!!
1008
FSST
FSST
...
I WAS THINKING ...
THEY SAY GREAT MEN ARE GREAT LOVERS.
BEING AS VIRILE AS EIGHTH PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ IS GOOD, RIGHT?
THERE IT IS...!
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN IS THE CLOSEST TO THE KING, OF COURSE.
BUT PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ'S DISPOSITION IS MORE FIT FOR THE THRONE.
AS EXPECTED, HIS PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS SALÉ-SALÉ HAS CHANGED.

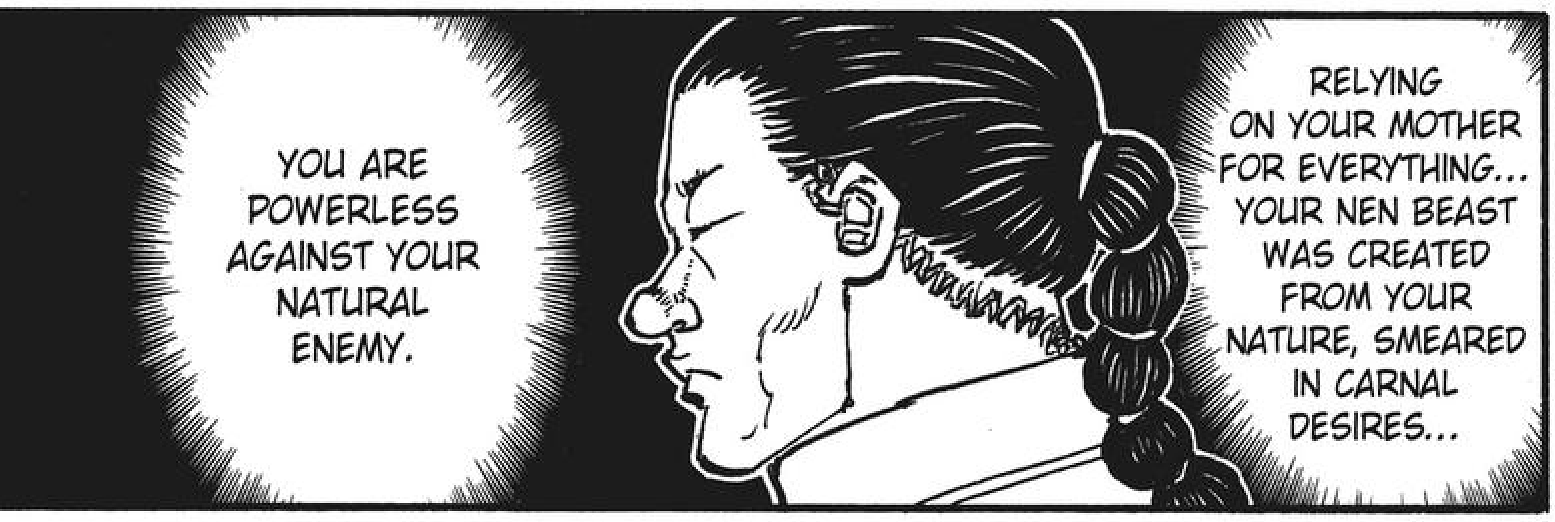

VMMMMMMMM
IT'S BEEN ABOUT 70 HOURS SINCE HE STARTED INHALING THE SMOKE.
MORE TIME IS NECESSARY TO MANIPULATE THE EMOTIONS OF THOSE WHO HAVE NO INITIAL AFFECTION...
I'M READY TO ACTIVATE IT!!
THE TARGET IS SALÉ-SALÉ'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST.
A DIFFUSIVE INDUCTION-TYPE MANIPULATOR.
KEEP BREATHING THE SMOKE EXHALED BY THE NEN BEAST AND A MINIATURE VERSION APPEARS ABOVE YOUR HEAD.
THE SMOKE IS EFFECTIVE UP TO A RADIUS OF 7 METERS. THE MORE GOODWILL YOU FEEL TOWARDS SALÉ-SALÉ TO BEGIN WITH, THE FASTER THE MINI BEAST APPEARS.
FOR THOSE ALREADY CLOSE TO HIM WITH MAXIMUM LOYALTY, IT TAKES EIGHT HOURS. FOR NEUTRAL PARTIES, IT TAKES 70 HOURS.
THE DUPLICATES ALSO EMIT SMOKE, WHICH IS EFFECTIVE FOR A RADIUS OF TWO METERS. THAT'S THE UPPER LIMIT FOR HAVING A FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATION.
IN SHORT, SALÉ-SALÉ'S NEN BEAST MANIPULATES GOODWILL WITH A SMOKELIKE AURA AND CAN ULTIMATELY COMMAND THE HEARTS OF AN ENTIRE COUNTRY.
IT TAKES TIME, BUT ONCE SUCCESSFUL, THE APPROVAL RATE WILL BE 100 PERCENT. THE WORLD'S SECUREST DICTATORSHIP.
BUT THAT'S ONLY IF HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS ARE ALL MORONIC PUSHOVERS WITH NO STRATEGY.
COME FORTH, PREDATOR!!
VMMMMM

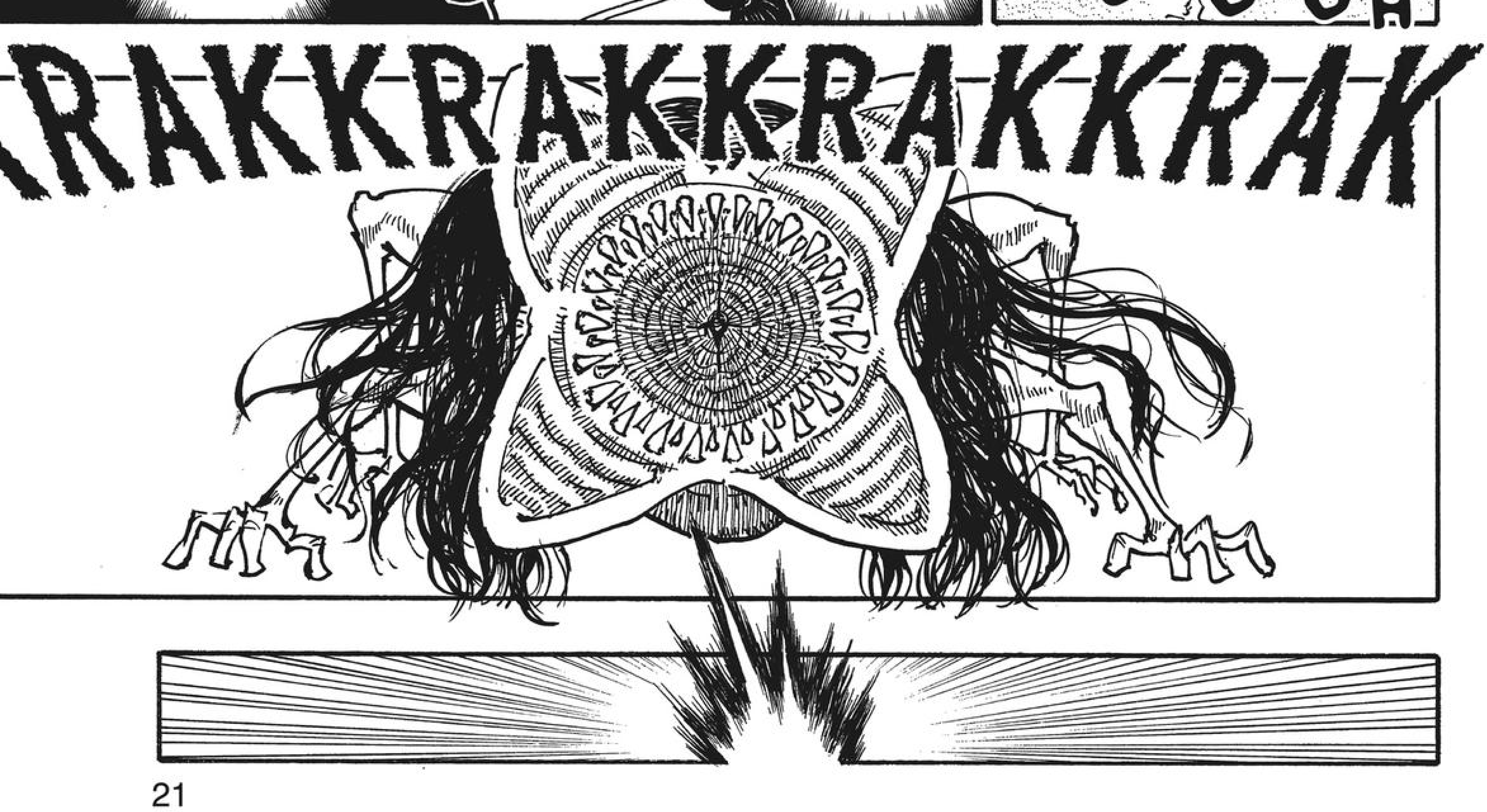

DM DM DM DM DM
DM DM DM DM
INGENU-OUS.
A WARM HEART.
DM DM GR DM DM DM GRR DM
PSSHT

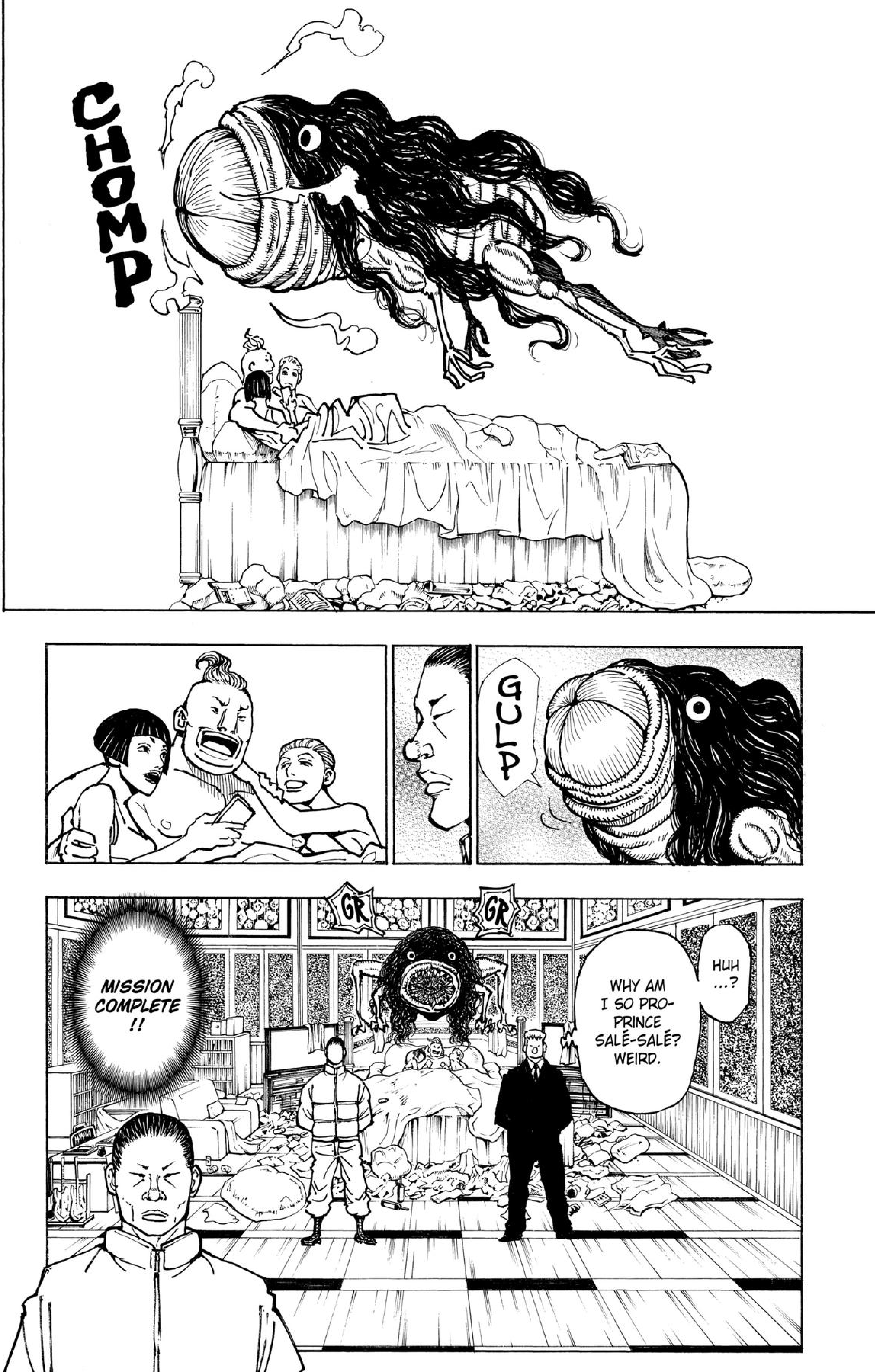

GREK
GRAK
G
G
POPULAR WITH THE LADIES.
I WISH *I* COULD BE LIKE THAT.
RIGHT?
G
FSH
PASH!!
GK
KEE
...
WHAT WAS I TALKING ABOUT...?

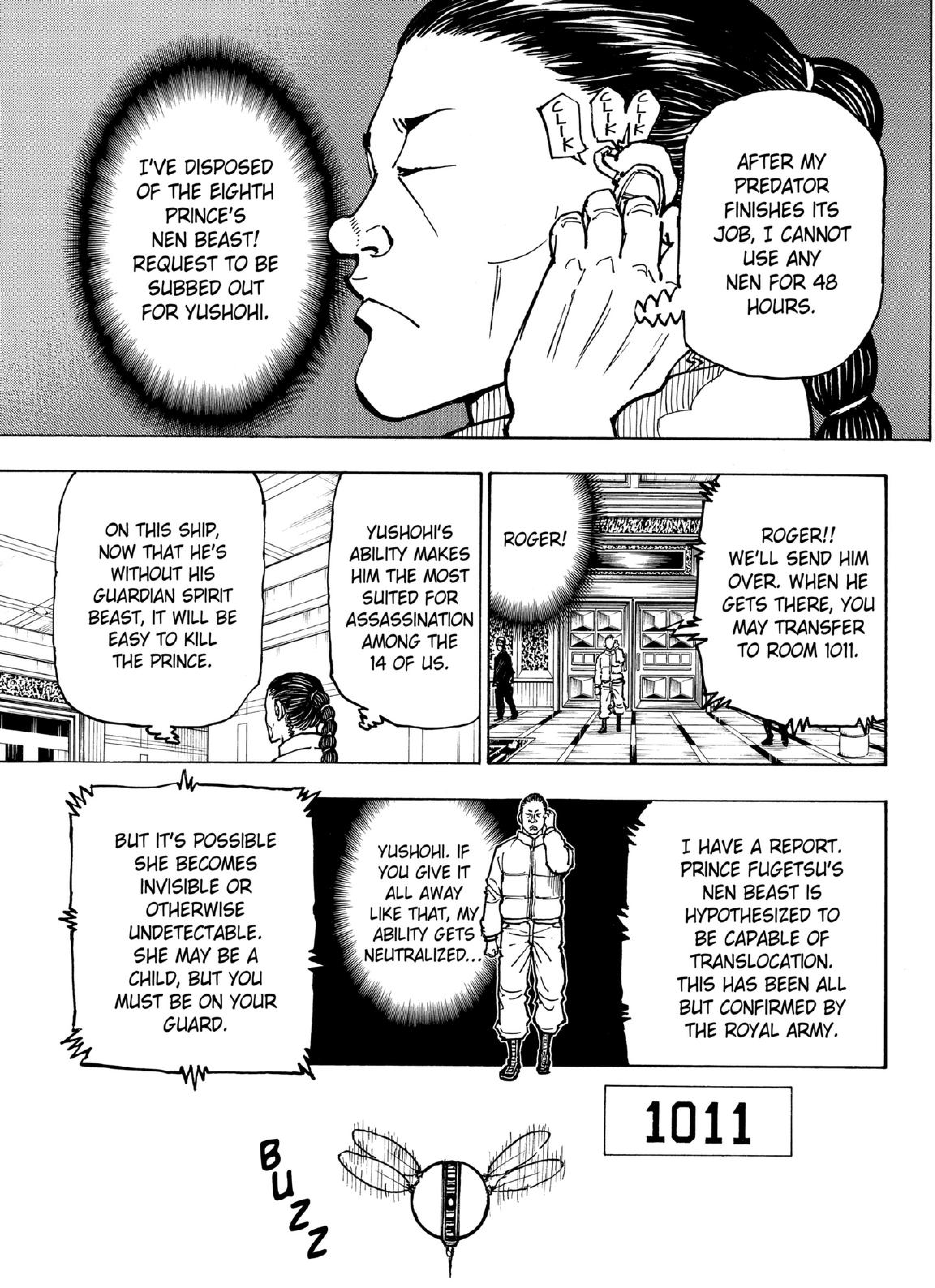

GRIK
GRAK

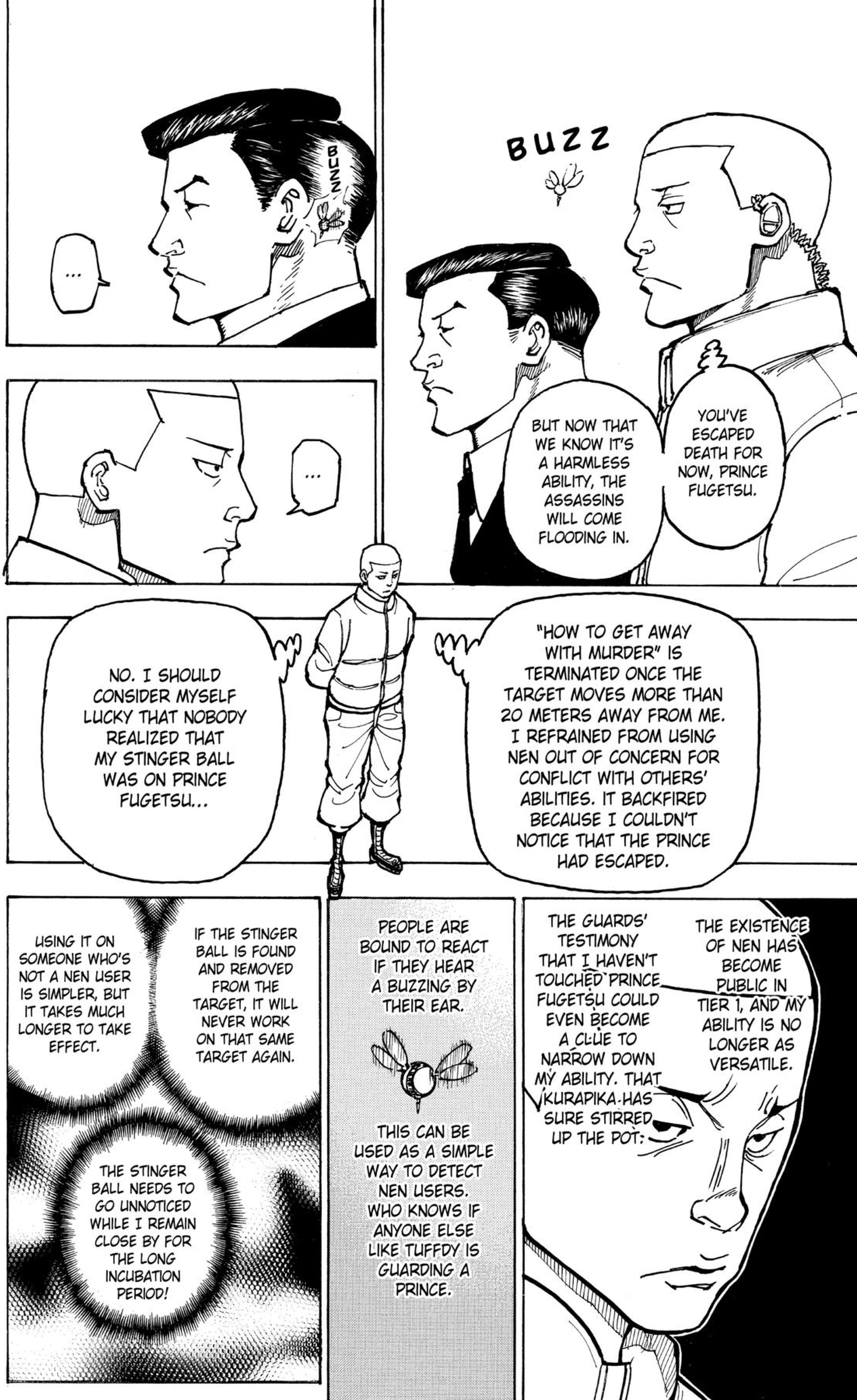

FSSH
OOOOOOH

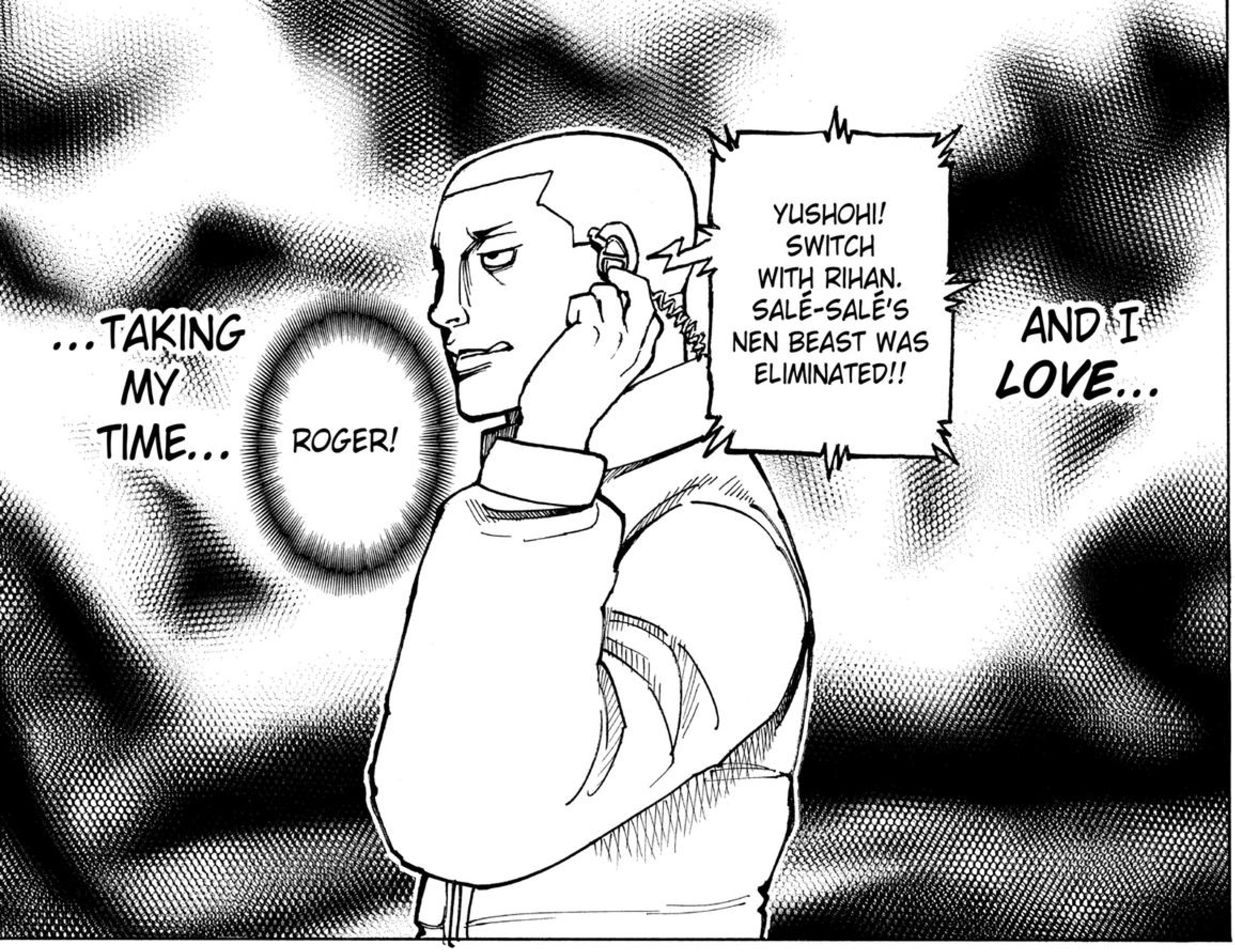

RELYING ON YOUR MOTHER FOR EVERYTHING… YOUR NEN BEAST WAS CREATED FROM YOUR NATURE, SMEARED IN CARNAL DESIRES…
YOU ARE POWERLESS AGAINST YOUR NATURAL ENEMY.

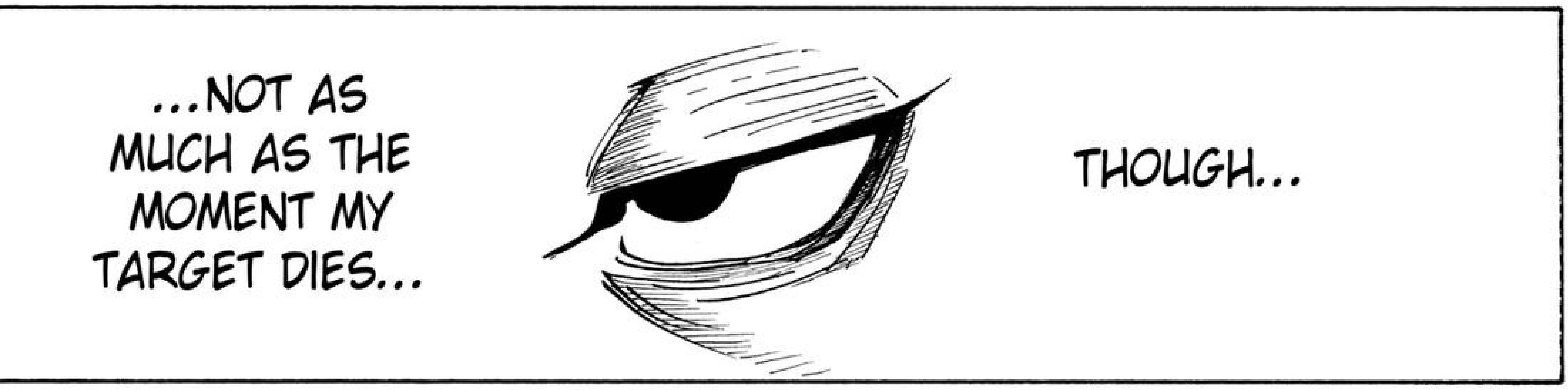

KRAKKRAKKRAK

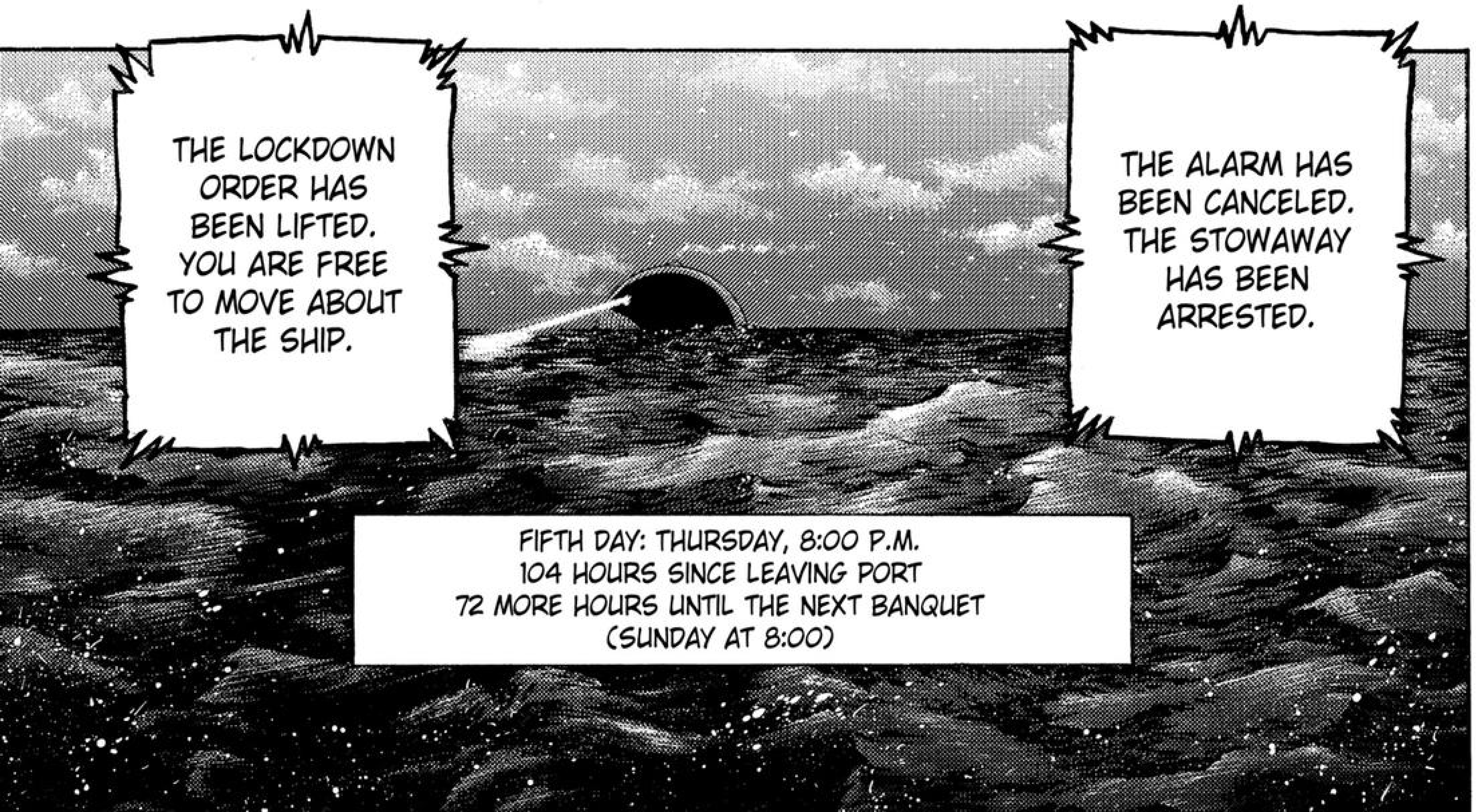

CHOMP
GULP
HUH ...?
WHY AM I SO PRO- PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ? WEIRD.
GR
GR
MISSION COMPLETE !!

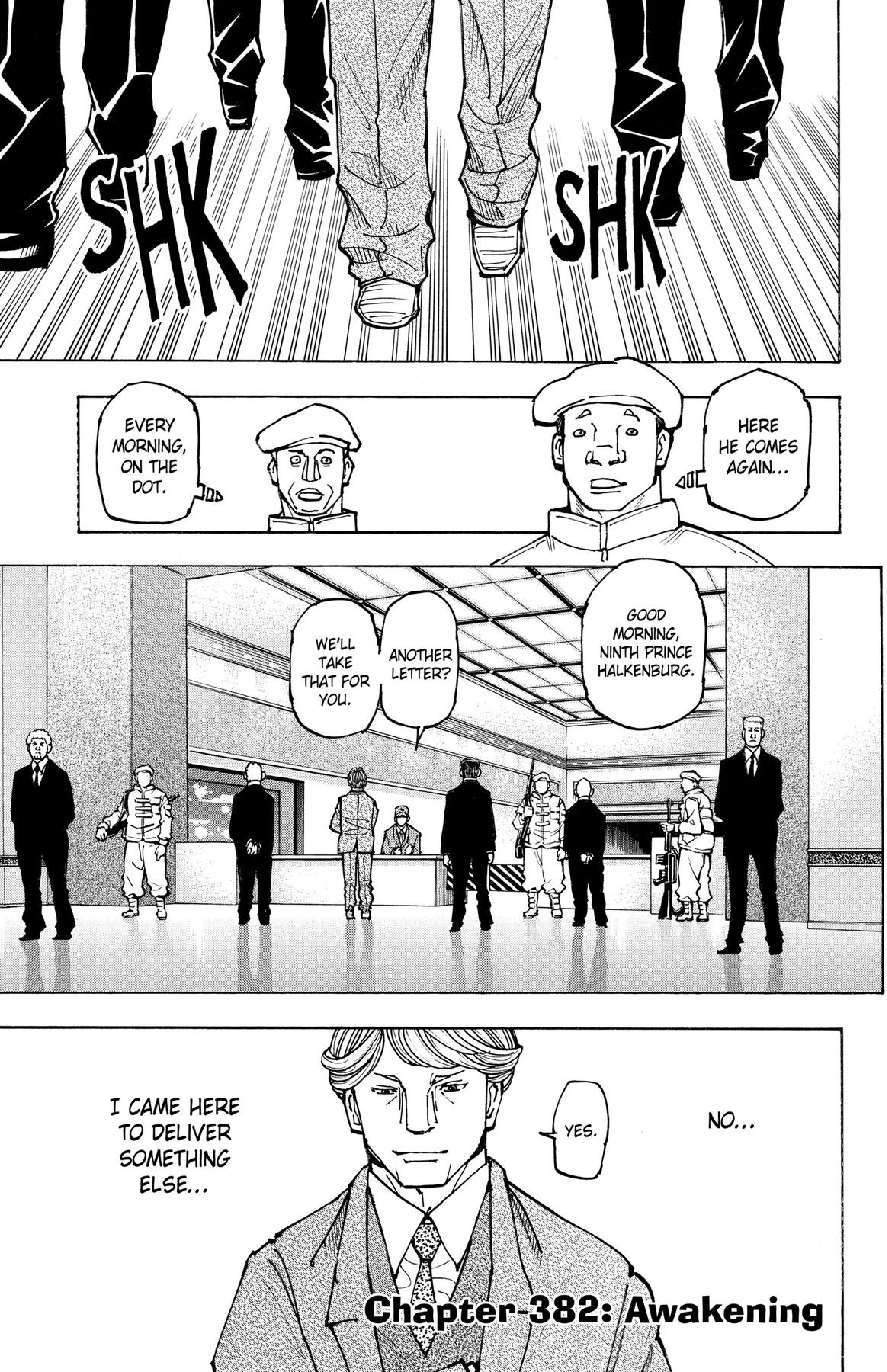

CLIK CLIK CLIK
AFTER MY PREDATOR FINISHES ITS JOB, I CANNOT USE ANY NEN FOR 48 HOURS.
I'VE DISPOSED OF THE EIGHTH PRINCE'S NEN BEAST! REQUEST TO BE SUBBED OUT FOR YUSHOHI.
ROGER!! WE'LL SEND HIM OVER. WHEN HE GETS THERE, YOU MAY TRANSFER TO ROOM 1011.
ROGER!
YUSHOHI'S ABILITY MAKES HIM THE MOST SUITED FOR ASSASSINATION AMONG THE 14 OF US.
ON THIS SHIP, NOW THAT HE'S WITHOUT HIS GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST, IT WILL BE EASY TO KILL THE PRINCE.
I HAVE A REPORT. PRINCE FUGETSU'S NEN BEAST IS HYPOTHESIZED TO BE CAPABLE OF TRANSLOCATION. THIS HAS BEEN ALL BUT CONFIRMED BY THE ROYAL ARMY.
YUSHOHI. IF YOU GIVE IT ALL AWAY LIKE THAT, MY ABILITY GETS NEUTRALIZED...
BUT IT'S POSSIBLE SHE BECOMES INVISIBLE OR OTHERWISE UNDETECTABLE. SHE MAY BE A CHILD, BUT YOU MUST BE ON YOUR GUARD.
1011
BUZZ


BUZZ
YOU'VE ESCAPED DEATH FOR NOW, PRINCE FUGETSU.
BUT NOW THAT WE KNOW IT'S A HARMLESS ABILITY, THE ASSASSINS WILL COME FLOODING IN.
BUZZ
...
...
"HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER" IS TERMINATED ONCE THE TARGET MOVES MORE THAN 20 METERS AWAY FROM ME. I REFRAINED FROM USING NEN OUT OF CONCERN FOR CONFLICT WITH OTHERS' ABILITIES. IT BACKFIRED BECAUSE I COULDN'T NOTICE THAT THE PRINCE HAD ESCAPED.
NO. I SHOULD CONSIDER MYSELF LUCKY THAT NOBODY REALIZED THAT MY STINGER BALL WAS ON PRINCE FUGETSU...
THE EXISTENCE OF NEN HAS BECOME PUBLIC IN TIER 1, AND MY ABILITY IS NO LONGER AS VERSATILE.
THE GUARDS' TESTIMONY THAT I HAVEN'T TOUCHED PRINCE FUGETSU COULD EVEN BECOME A CLUE TO NARROW DOWN MY ABILITY. THAT KURAPIKA HAS SURE STIRRED UP THE POT.
PEOPLE ARE BOUND TO REACT IF THEY HEAR A BUZZING BY THEIR EAR.
THIS CAN BE USED AS A SIMPLE WAY TO DETECT NEN USERS. WHO KNOWS IF ANYONE ELSE LIKE TUFFDY IS GUARDING A PRINCE.
IF THE STINGER BALL IS FOUND AND REMOVED FROM THE TARGET, IT WILL NEVER WORK ON THAT SAME TARGET AGAIN.
USING IT ON SOMEONE WHO'S NOT A NEN USER IS SIMPLER, BUT IT TAKES MUCH LONGER TO TAKE EFFECT.
THE STINGER BALL NEEDS TO GO UNNOTICED WHILE I REMAIN CLOSE BY FOR THE LONG INCUBATION PERIOD!

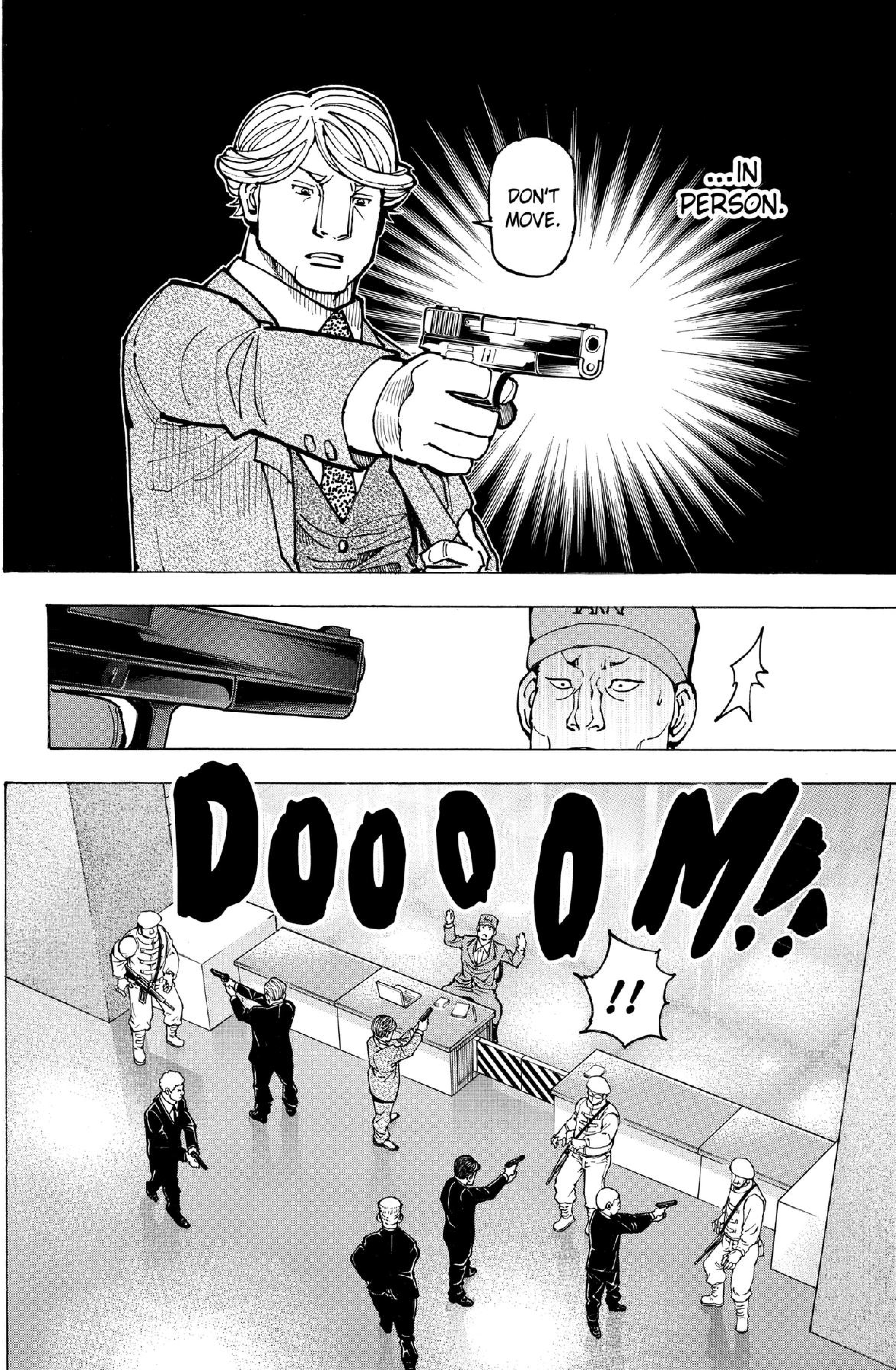

...TAKING MY TIME...
YUSHOHI! SWITCH WITH RIHAN. SALÉ-SALÉ'S NEN BEAST WAS ELIMINATED!!
ROGER!
AND I *LOVE*...

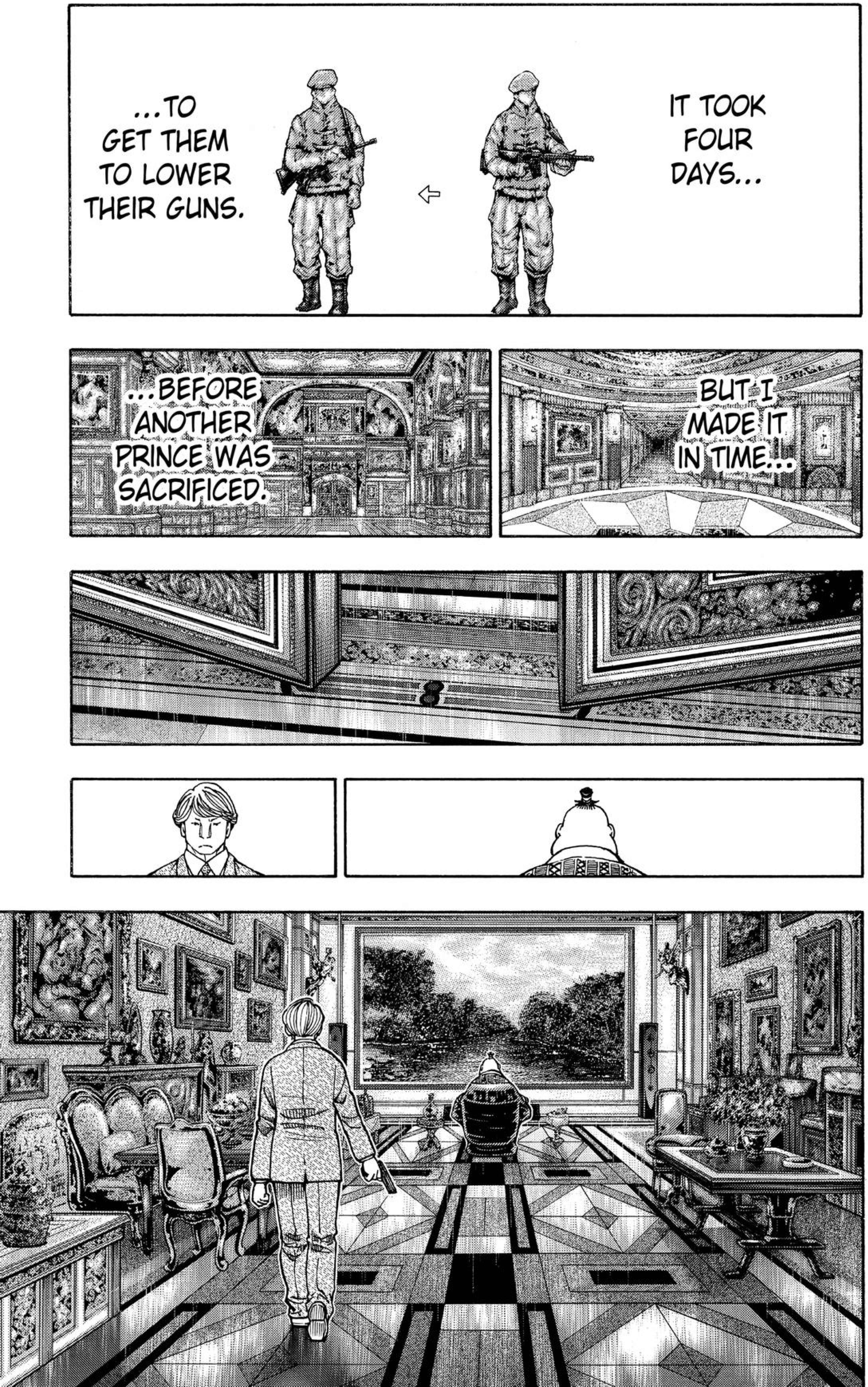

...NOT AS MUCH AS THE MOMENT MY TARGET DIES...
THOUGH...

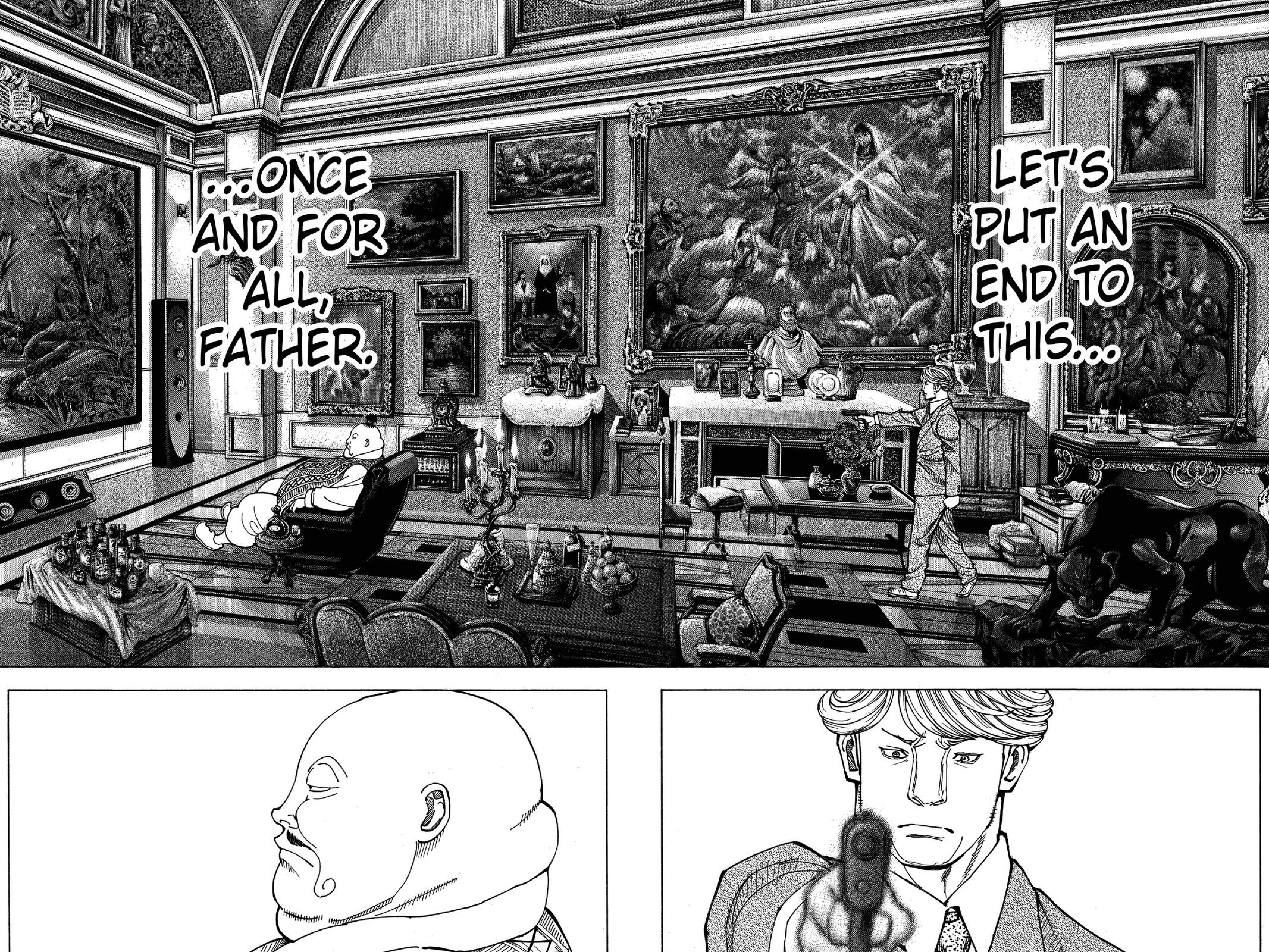

THE LOCKDOWN ORDER HAS BEEN LIFTED. YOU ARE FREE TO MOVE ABOUT THE SHIP.
THE ALARM HAS BEEN CANCELED. THE STOWAWAY HAS BEEN ARRESTED.
FIFTH DAY: THURSDAY, 8:00 P.M.
104 HOURS SINCE LEAVING PORT
72 MORE HOURS UNTIL THE NEXT BANQUET
(SUNDAY AT 8:00)

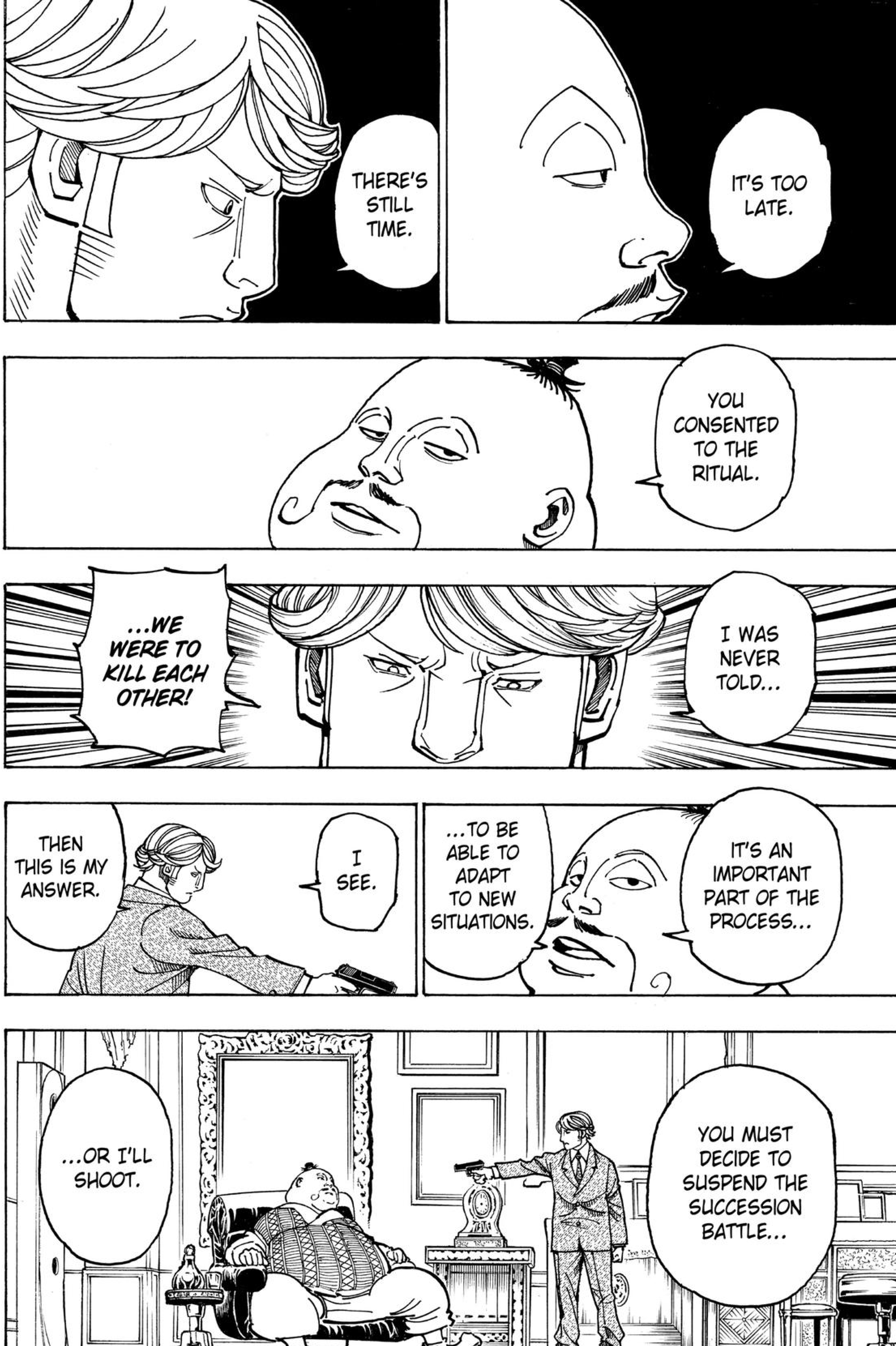

SHK
SHK
HERE HE COMES AGAIN...
EVERY MORNING, ON THE DOT.
GOOD MORNING, NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG.
ANOTHER LETTER?
WE'LL TAKE THAT FOR YOU.
YES.
NO...
I CAME HERE TO DELIVER SOMETHING ELSE...

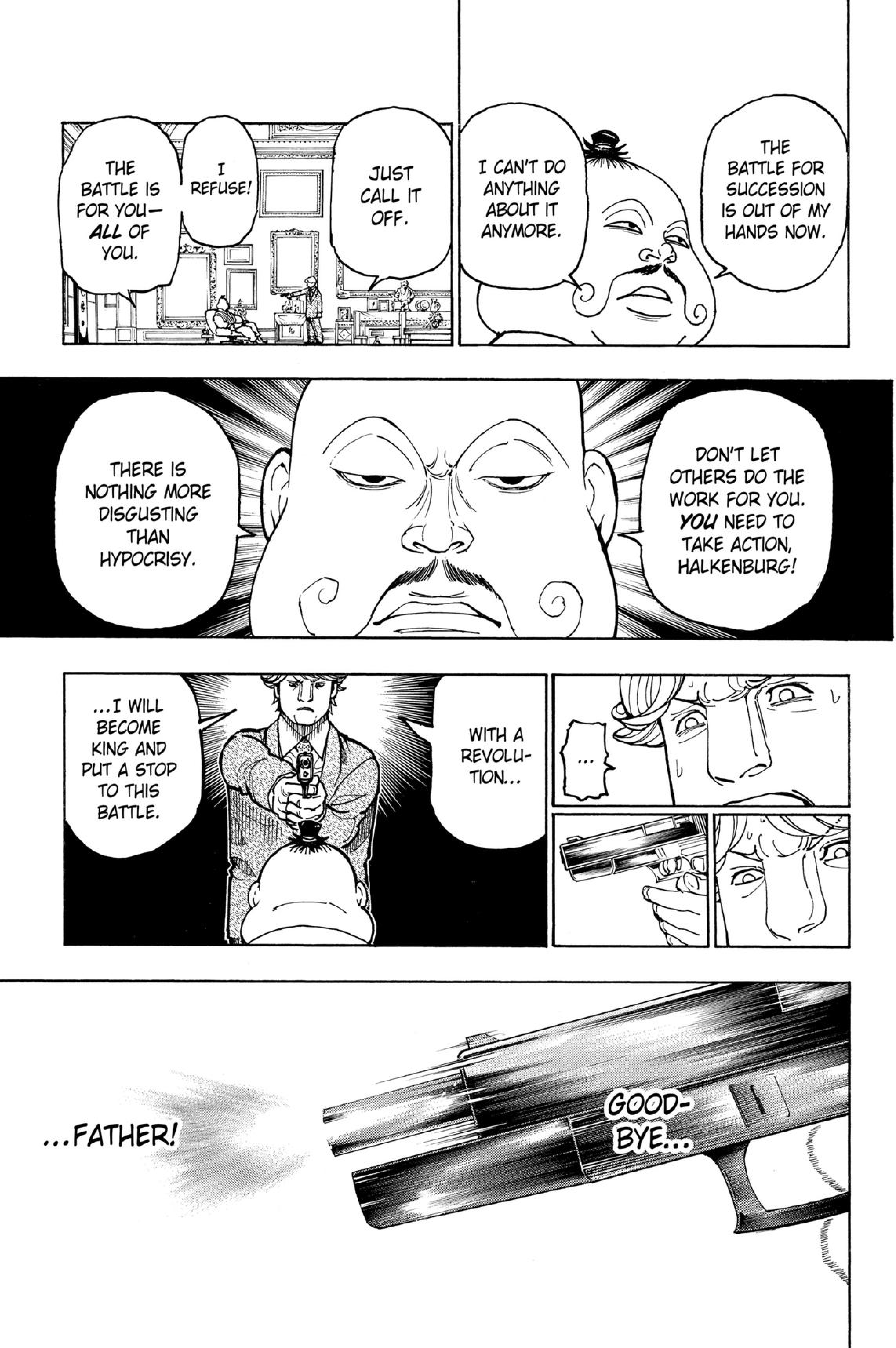
Chapter-382: Awakening

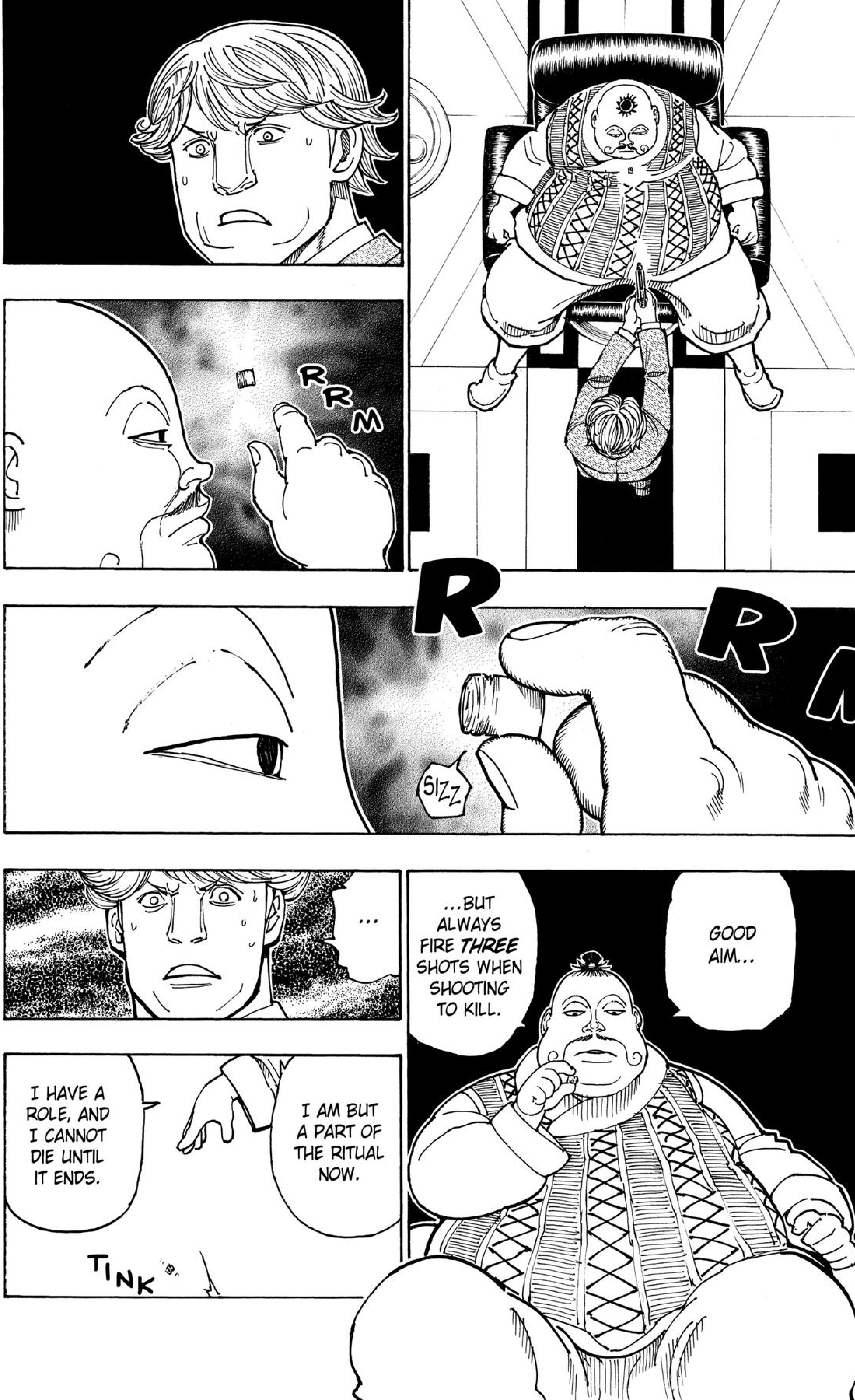

...IN PERSON.
DON'T MOVE.
DOOOOM!!
!!

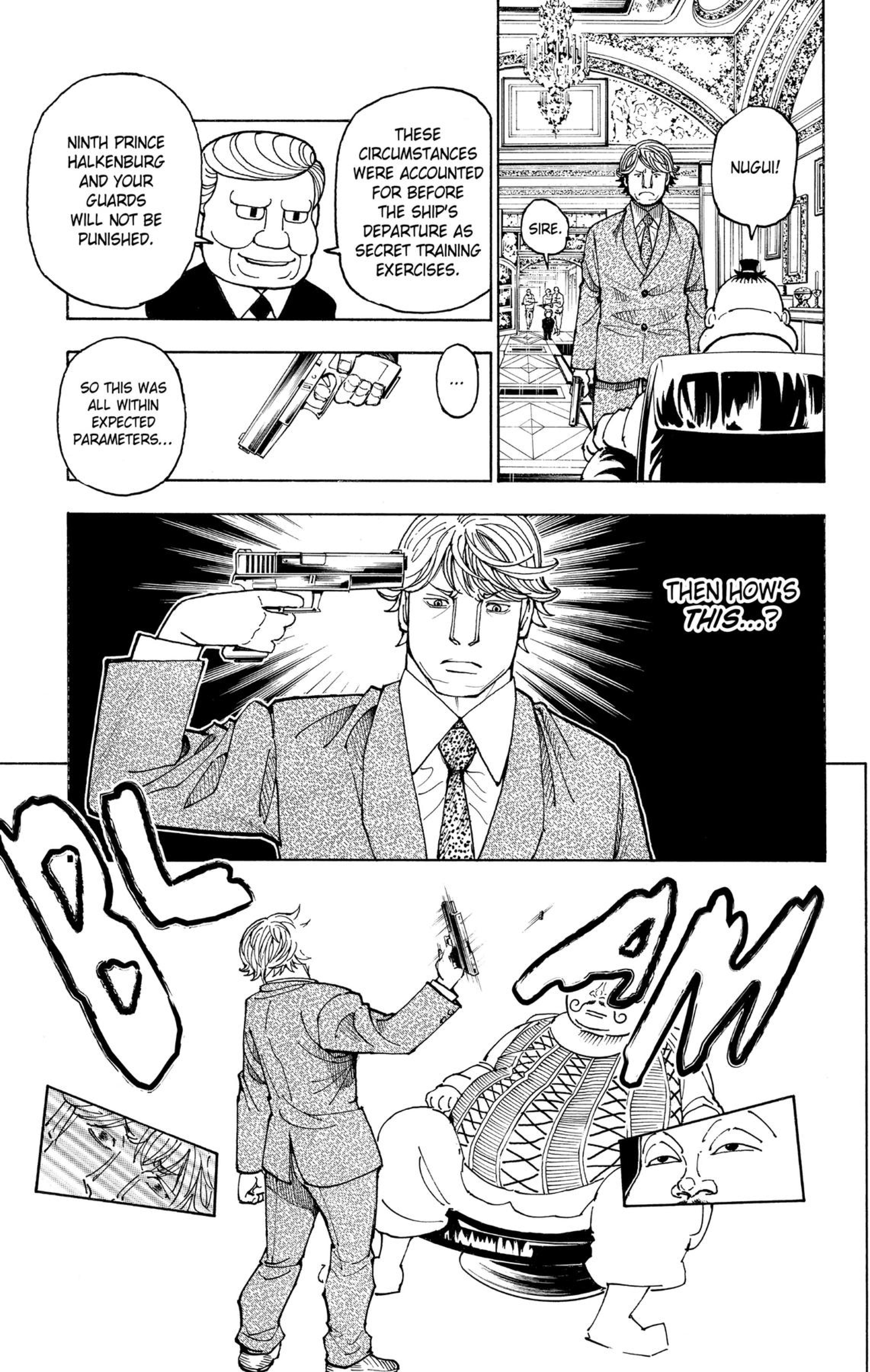

IT TOOK FOUR DAYS...
...TO GET THEM TO LOWER THEIR GUNS.
BUT I MADE IT IN TIME...
...BEFORE ANOTHER PRINCE WAS SACRIFICED.

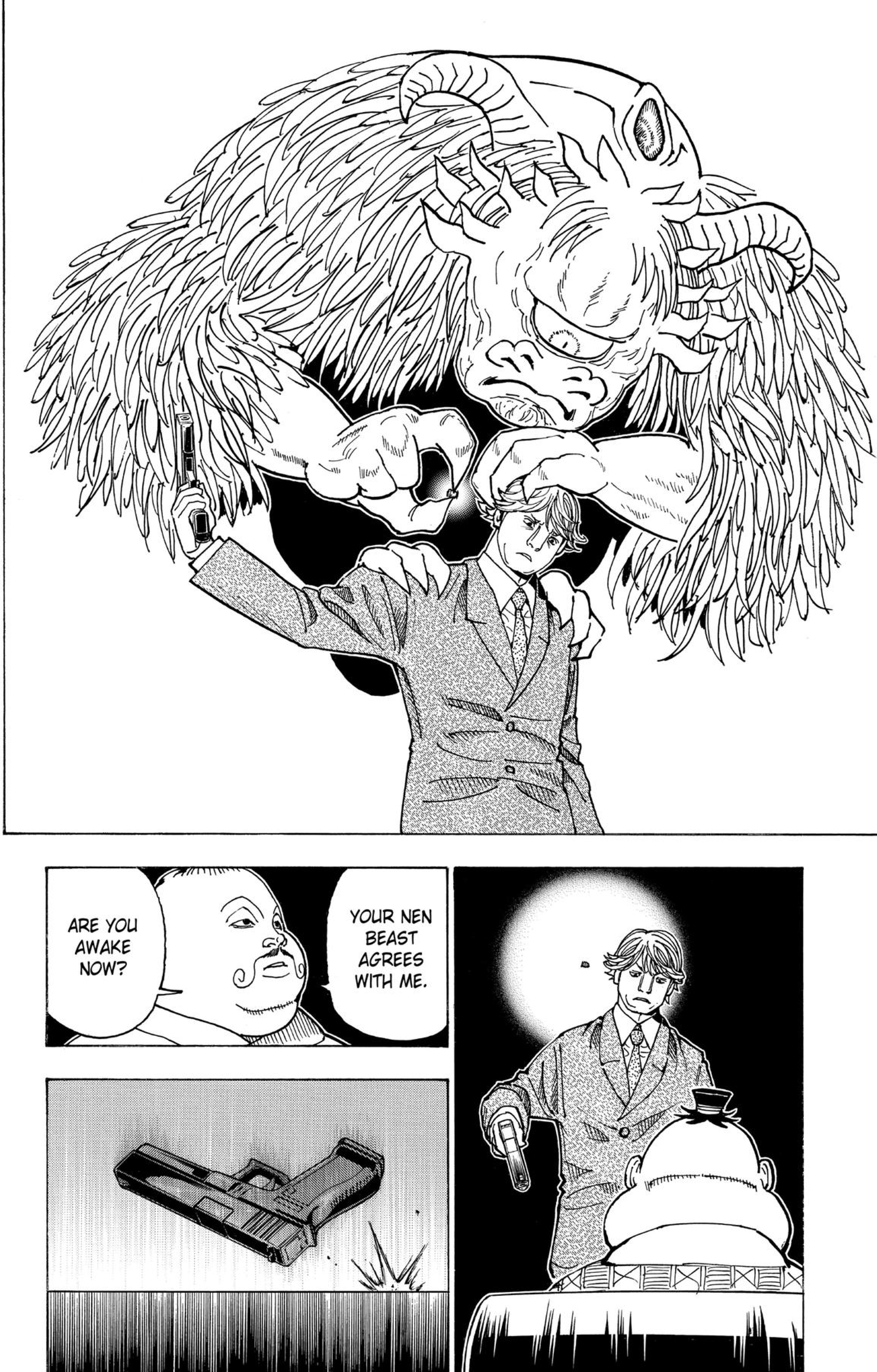

LET'S PUT AN END TO THIS...
...ONCE AND FOR ALL, FATHER.

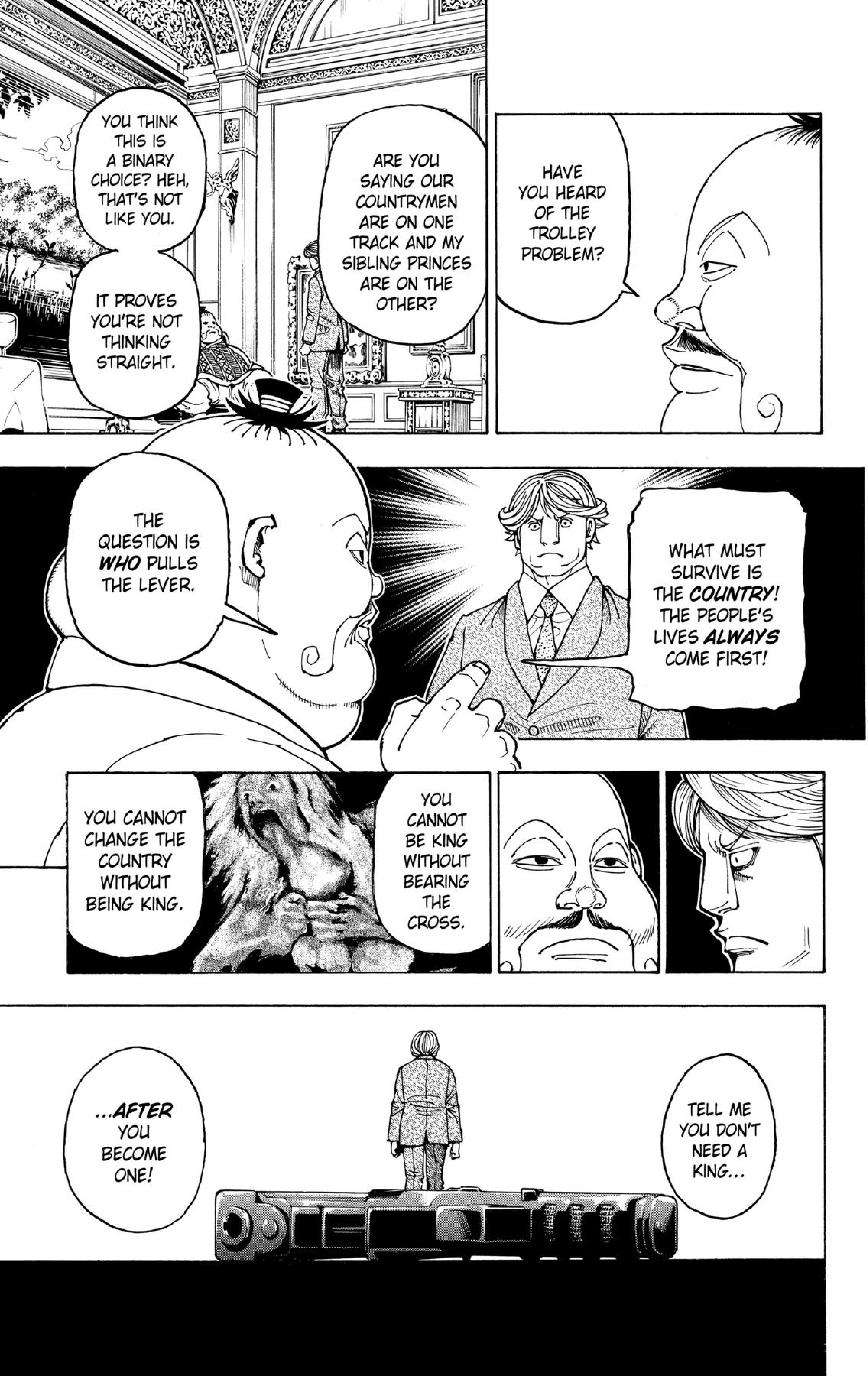

IT'S TOO LATE.
THERE'S STILL TIME.
YOU CONSENTED TO THE RITUAL.
I WAS NEVER TOLD...
...WE WERE TO KILL EACH OTHER!
IT'S AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PROCESS...
...TO BE ABLE TO ADAPT TO NEW SITUATIONS.
I SEE.
THEN THIS IS MY ANSWER.
YOU MUST DECIDE TO SUSPEND THE SUCCESSION BATTLE...
...OR I'LL SHOOT.

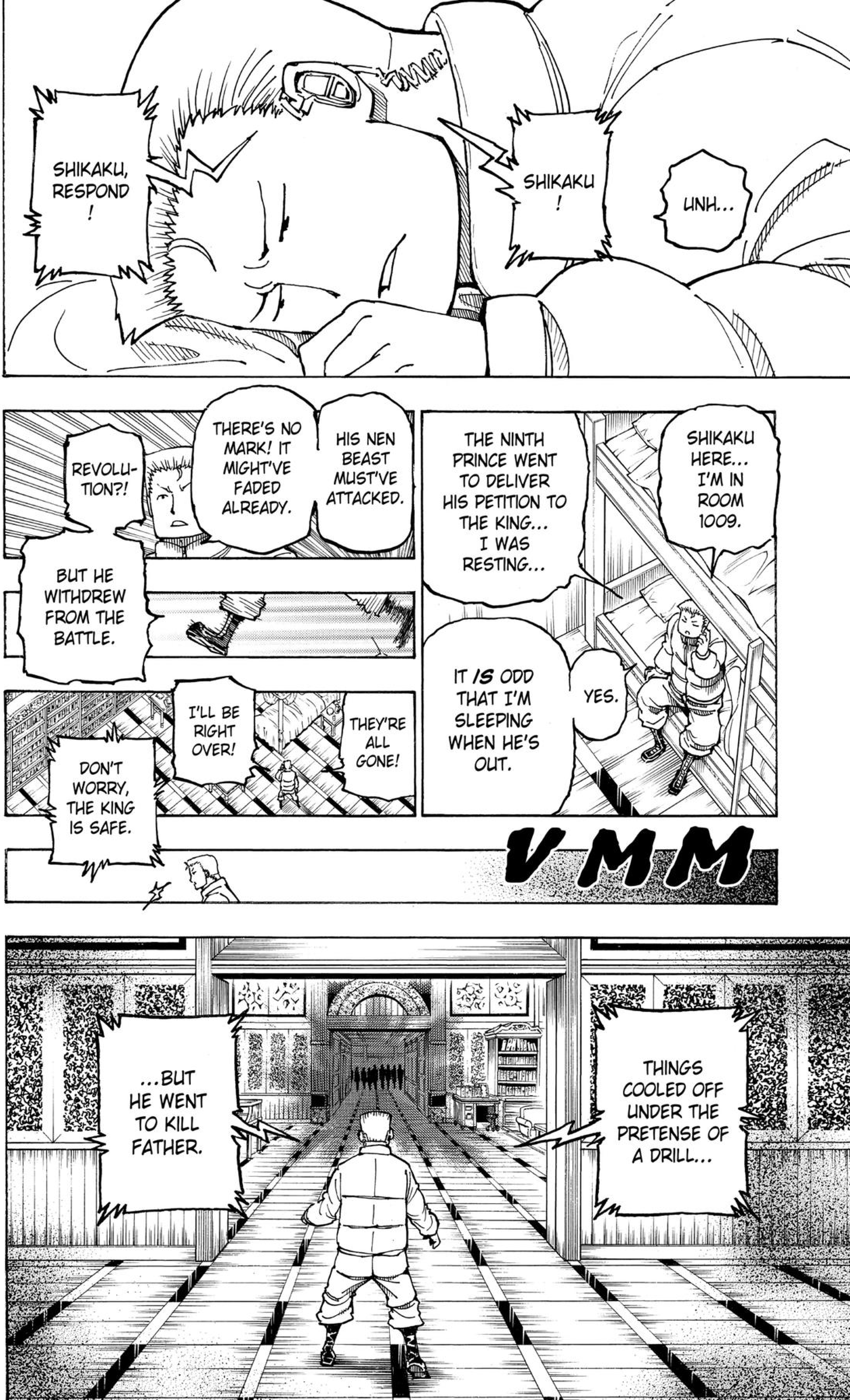

THE BATTLE FOR SUCCESSION IS OUT OF MY HANDS NOW.
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT ANYMORE.
JUST CALL IT OFF.
I REFUSE!
THE BATTLE IS FOR YOU—**ALL** OF YOU.
DON'T LET OTHERS DO THE WORK FOR YOU. **YOU** NEED TO TAKE ACTION, HALKENBURG!
THERE IS NOTHING MORE DISGUSTING THAN HYPOCRISY.
...
WITH A REVOLUTION...
...I WILL BECOME KING AND PUT A STOP TO THIS BATTLE.
GOOD-BYE...
...FATHER!

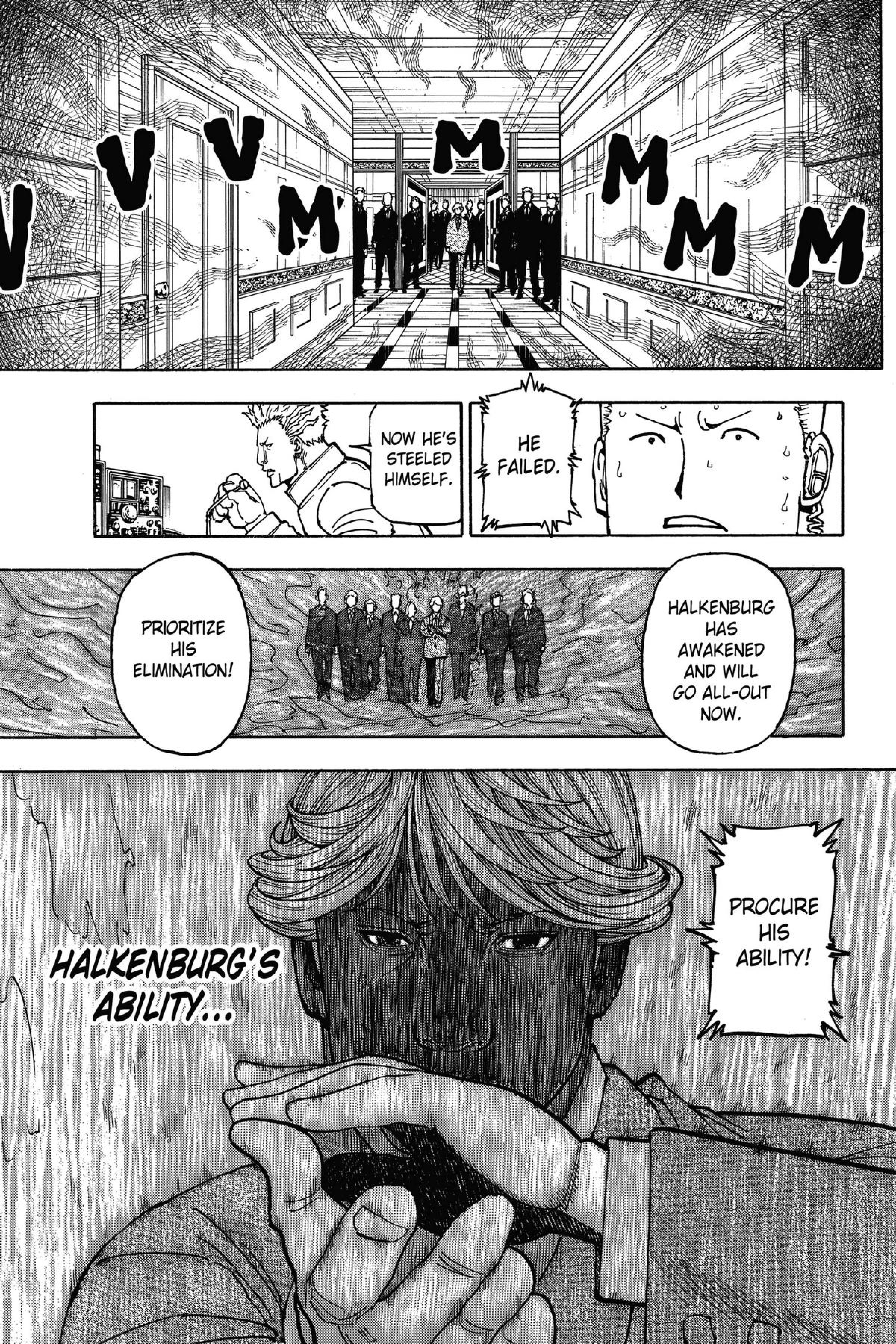

RRM
RRM
SIZZ
GOOD AIM...
...BUT ALWAYS FIRE *THREE* SHOTS WHEN SHOOTING TO KILL.
...
I AM BUT A PART OF THE RITUAL NOW.
I HAVE A ROLE, AND I CANNOT DIE UNTIL IT ENDS.
TINK

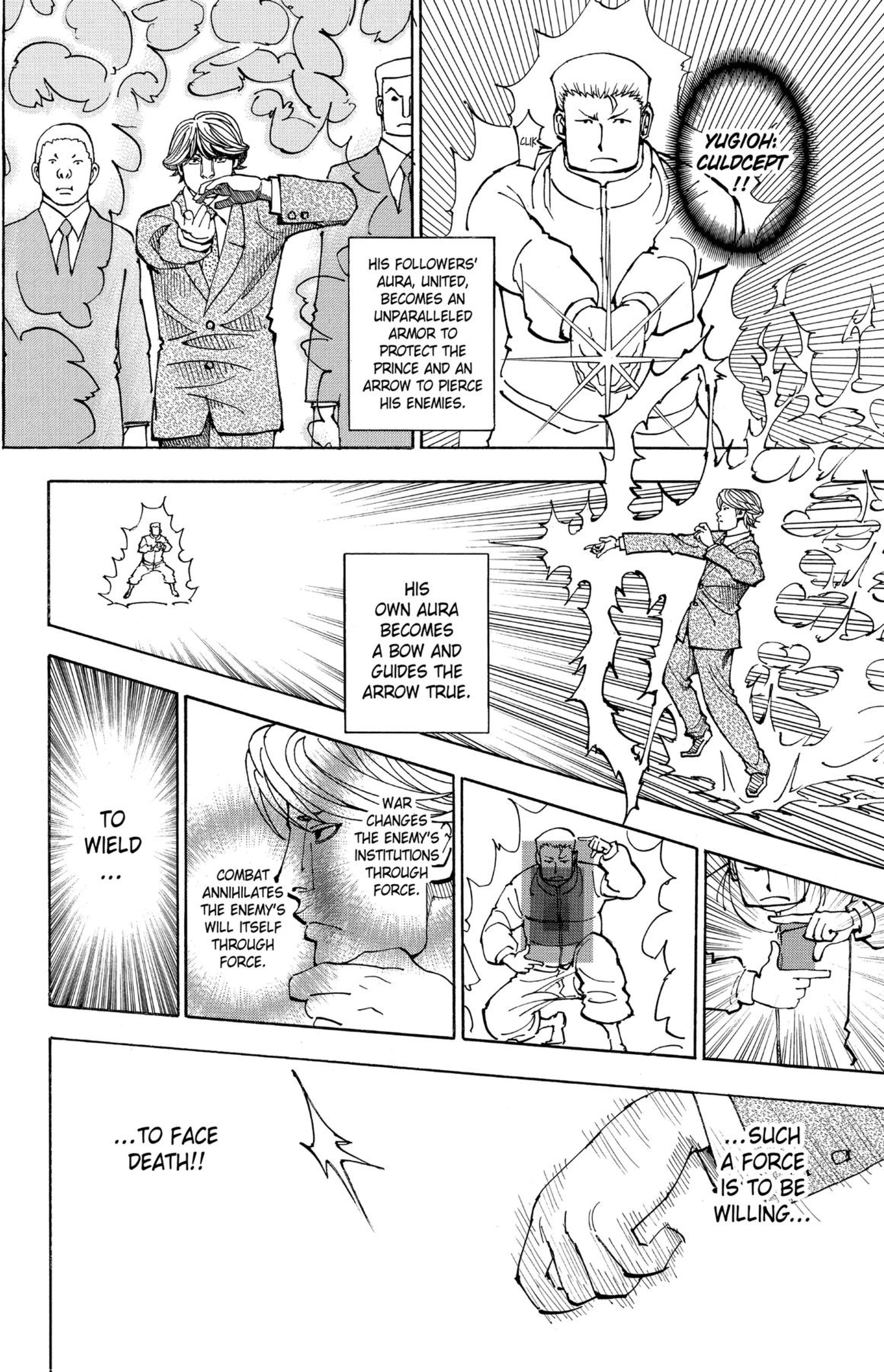

NUGUI!
SIRE.
THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE ACCOUNTED FOR BEFORE THE SHIP'S DEPARTURE AS SECRET TRAINING EXERCISES.
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG AND YOUR GUARDS WILL NOT BE PUNISHED.
...
SO THIS WAS ALL WITHIN EXPECTED PARAMETERS...
THEN HOW'S THIS...?
BLAM

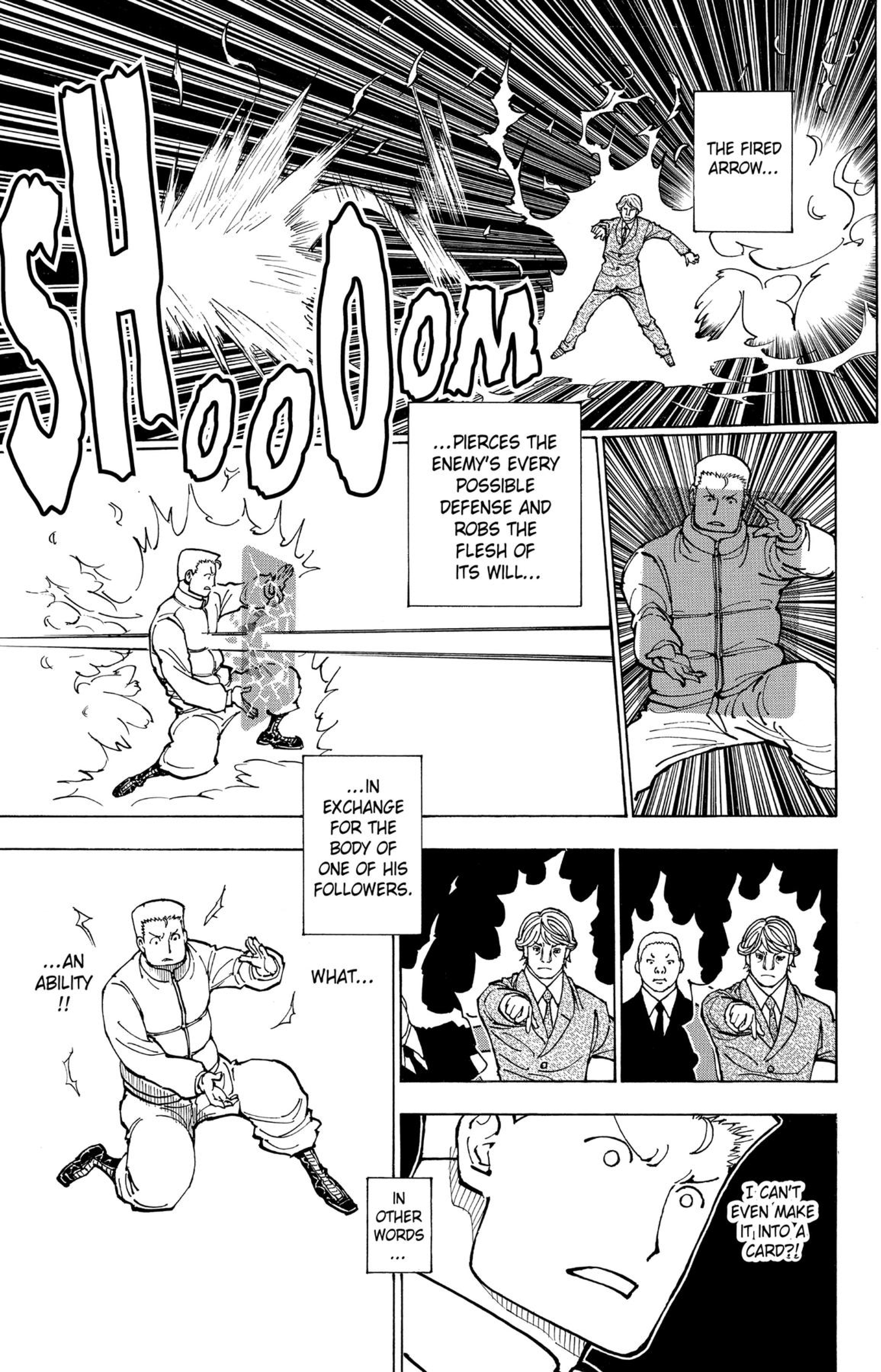

YOUR NEN BEAST AGREES WITH ME.
ARE YOU AWAKE NOW?

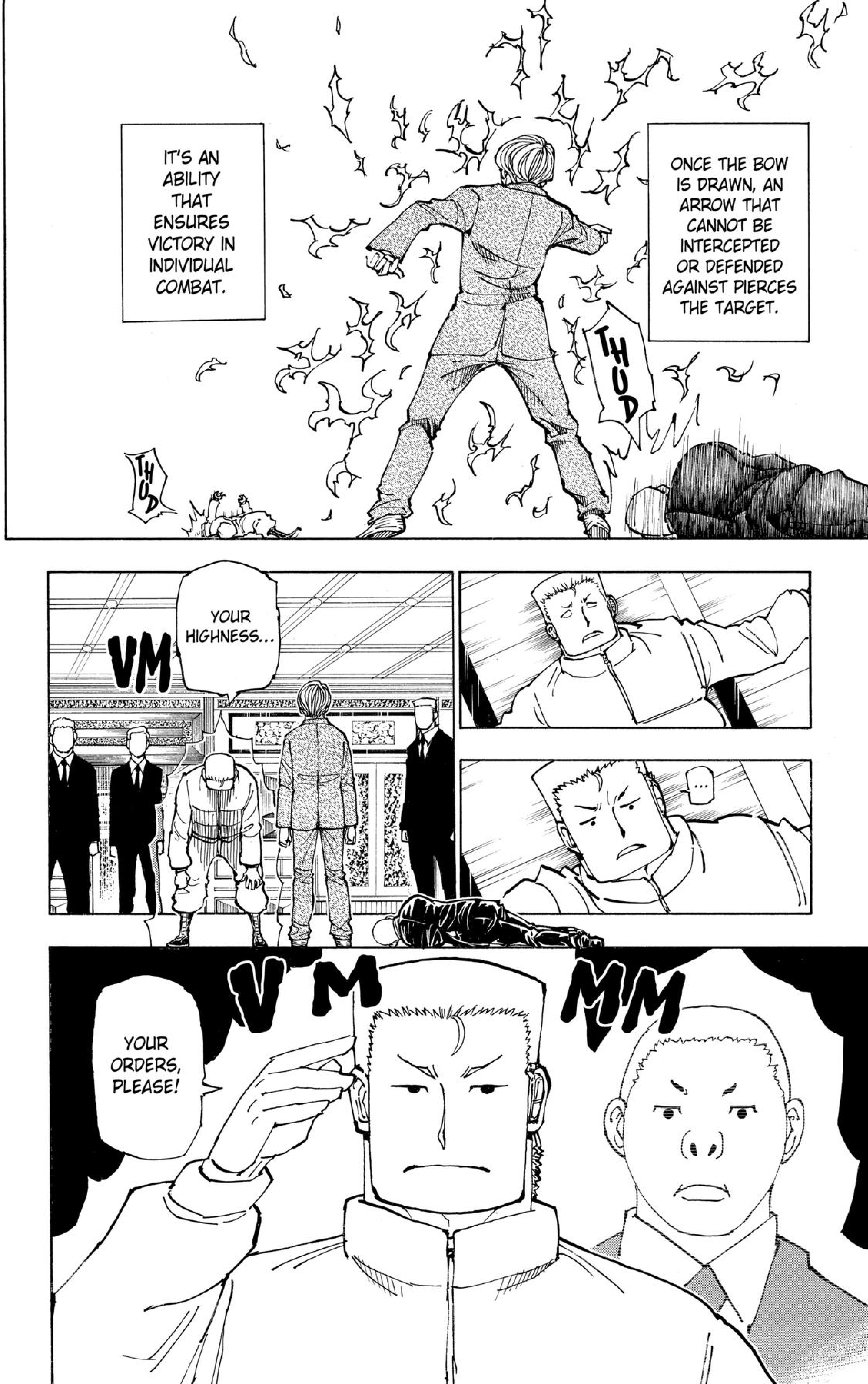

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE TROLLEY PROBLEM?
ARE YOU SAYING OUR COUNTRYMEN ARE ON ONE TRACK AND MY SIBLING PRINCES ARE ON THE OTHER?
YOU THINK THIS IS A BINARY CHOICE? HEH, THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU.
IT PROVES YOU'RE NOT THINKING STRAIGHT.
WHAT MUST SURVIVE IS THE ***COUNTRY***! THE PEOPLE'S LIVES ***ALWAYS*** COME FIRST!
THE QUESTION IS ***WHO*** PULLS THE LEVER.
YOU CANNOT BE KING WITHOUT BEARING THE CROSS.
YOU CANNOT CHANGE THE COUNTRY WITHOUT BEING KING.
TELL ME YOU DON'T NEED A KING...
...***AFTER*** YOU BECOME ONE!

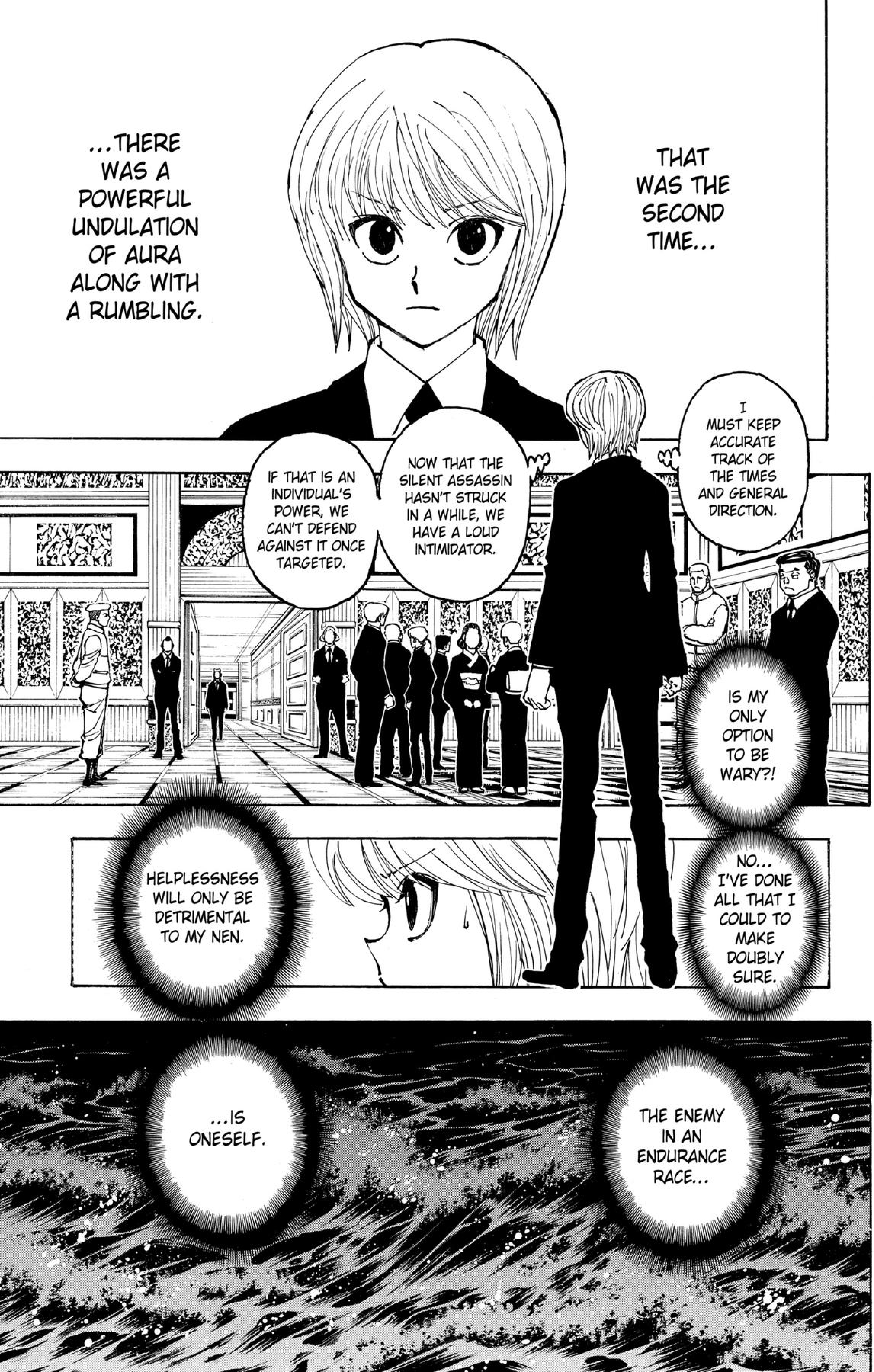

UNH...
SHIKAKU!
SHIKAKU, RESPOND!
SHIKAKU HERE... I'M IN ROOM 1009.
THE NINTH PRINCE WENT TO DELIVER HIS PETITION TO THE KING... I WAS RESTING...
YES.
IT IS ODD THAT I'M SLEEPING WHEN HE'S OUT.
HIS NEN BEAST MUST'VE ATTACKED.
THERE'S NO MARK! IT MIGHT'VE FADED ALREADY.
REVOLUTION?!
BUT HE WITHDREW FROM THE BATTLE.
THEY'RE ALL GONE!
I'LL BE RIGHT OVER!
DON'T WORRY, THE KING IS SAFE.
VMM
THINGS COOLED OFF UNDER THE PRETENSE OF A DRILL...
...BUT HE WENT TO KILL FATHER.

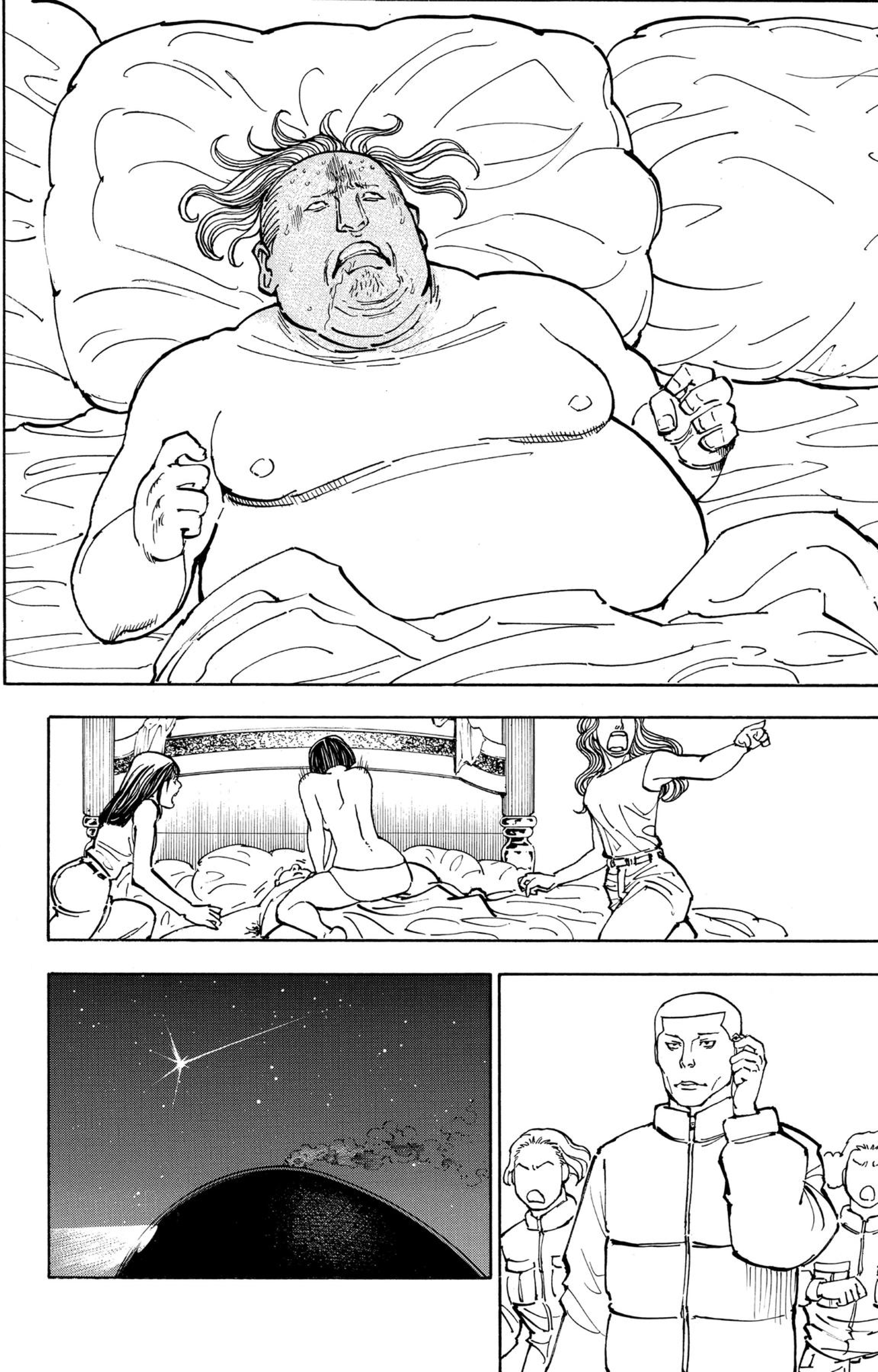

VVVMMMMM
HE FAILED.
NOW HE'S STEELED HIMSELF.
HALKENBURG HAS AWAKENED AND WILL GO ALL-OUT NOW.
PRIORITIZE HIS ELIMINATION!
PROCURE HIS ABILITY!
HALKENBURG'S ABILITY...

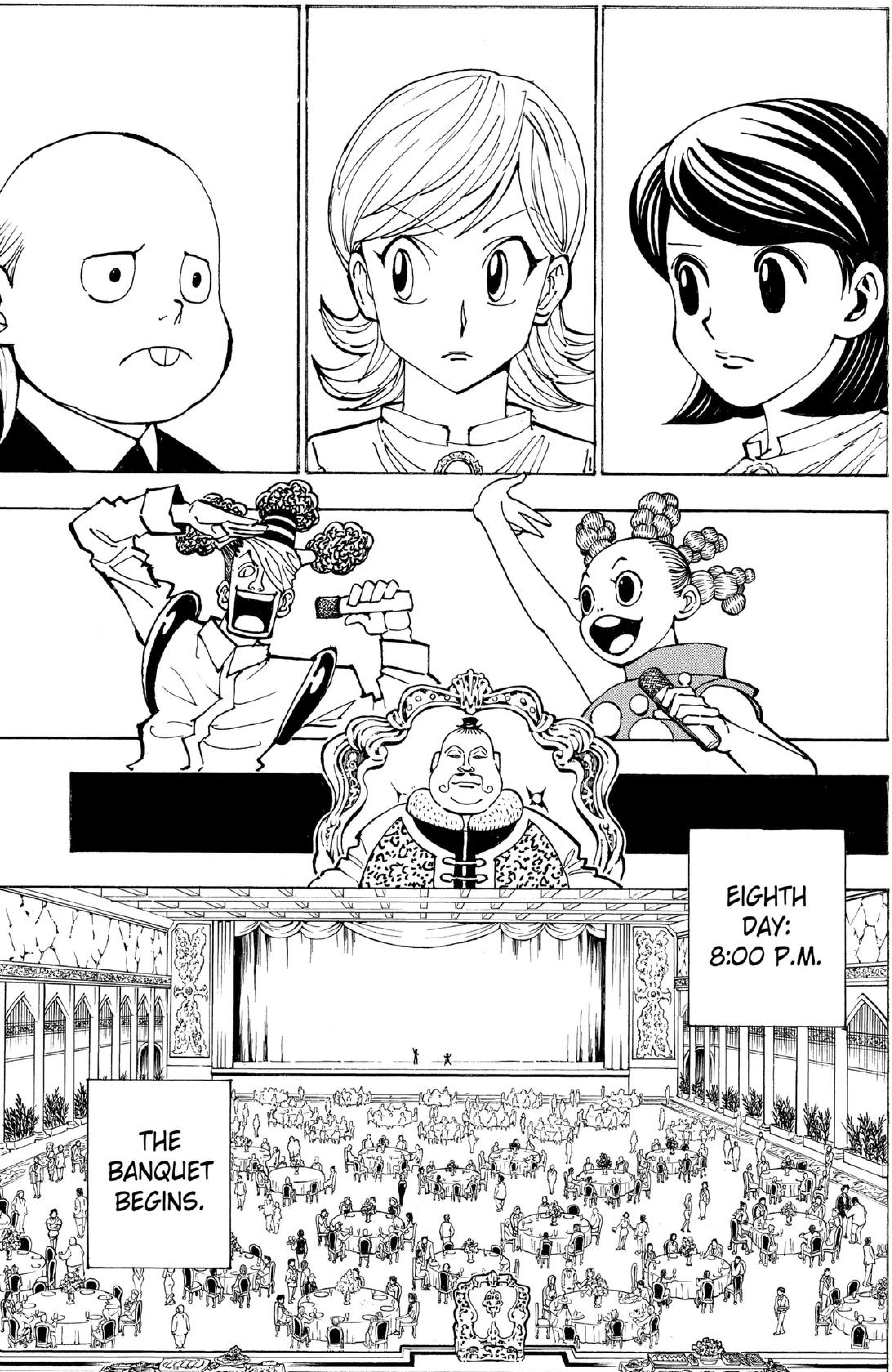

CLIK
YUGIOH: CULDCEPT!!
HIS FOLLOWERS' AURA, UNITED, BECOMES AN UNPARALLELED ARMOR TO PROTECT THE PRINCE AND AN ARROW TO PIERCE HIS ENEMIES.
HIS OWN AURA BECOMES A BOW AND GUIDES THE ARROW TRUE.
WAR CHANGES THE ENEMY'S INSTITUTIONS THROUGH FORCE.
COMBAT ANNIHILATES THE ENEMY'S WILL ITSELF THROUGH FORCE.
TO WIELD...
...SUCH A FORCE IS TO BE WILLING...
...TO FACE DEATH!!


THE FIRED ARROW...
SHOOOOM
...PIERCES THE ENEMY'S EVERY POSSIBLE DEFENSE AND ROBS THE FLESH OF ITS WILL...
...IN EXCHANGE FOR THE BODY OF ONE OF HIS FOLLOWERS.
WHAT...
...AN ABILITY !!
IN OTHER WORDS ...
I CAN'T EVEN MAKE IT INTO A CARD?!

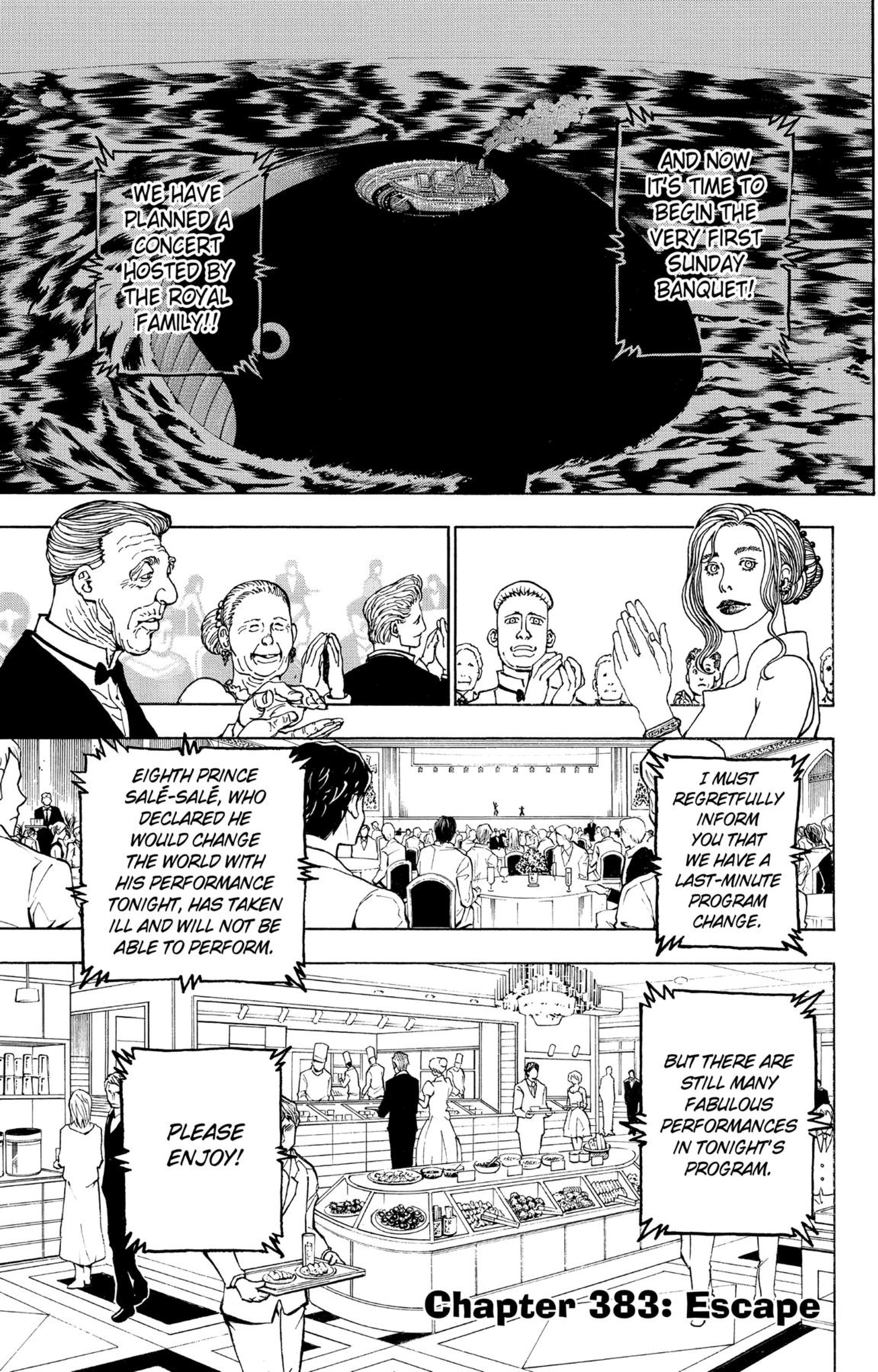

ONCE THE BOW IS DRAWN, AN ARROW THAT CANNOT BE INTERCEPTED OR DEFENDED AGAINST PIERCES THE TARGET.
THUD
IT'S AN ABILITY THAT ENSURES VICTORY IN INDIVIDUAL COMBAT.
THUD
...
YOUR HIGHNESS...
VM
VM MM
YOUR ORDERS, PLEASE!

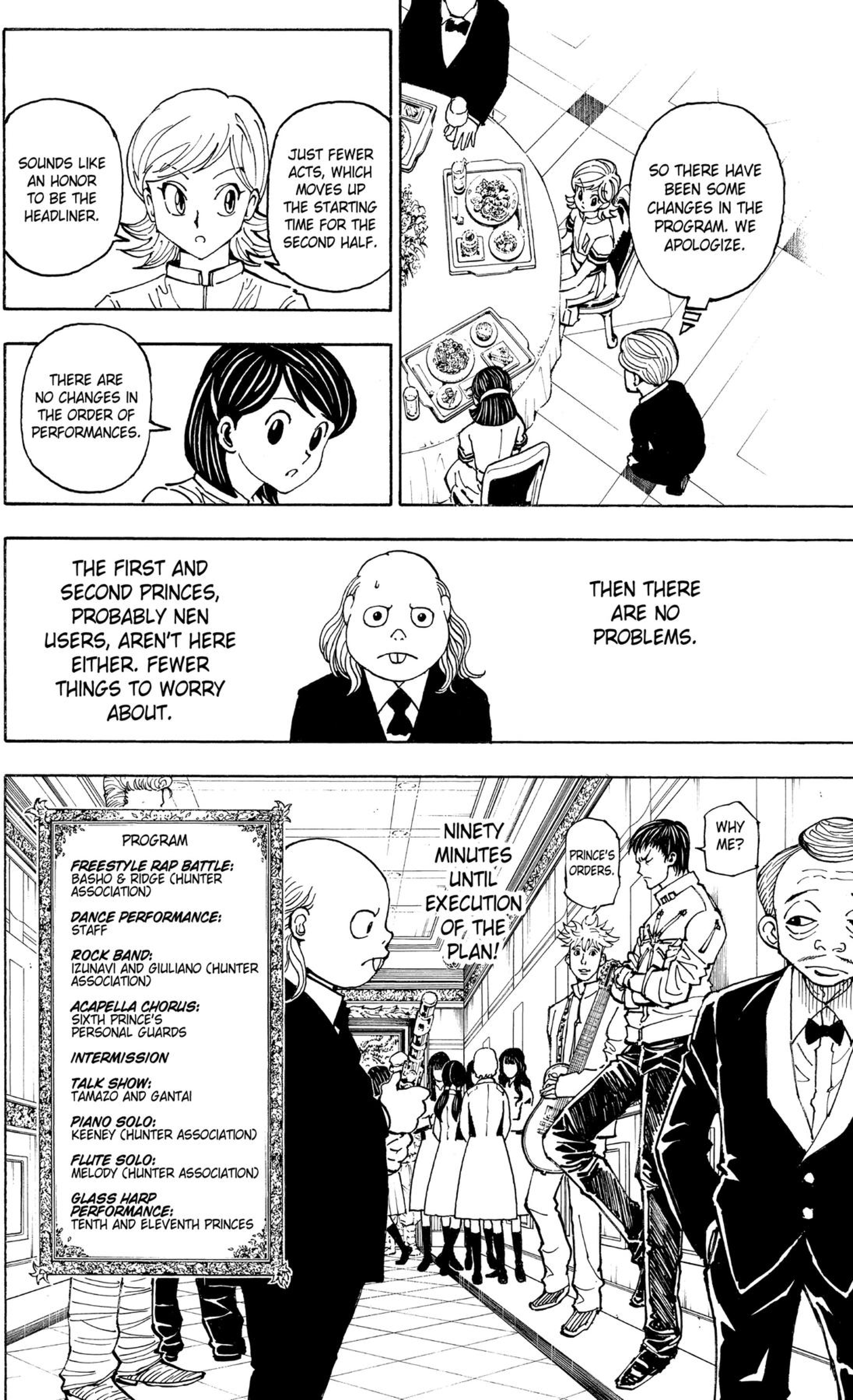

THAT WAS THE SECOND TIME…
…THERE WAS A POWERFUL UNDULATION OF AURA ALONG WITH A RUMBLING.
I MUST KEEP ACCURATE TRACK OF THE TIMES AND GENERAL DIRECTION.
NOW THAT THE SILENT ASSASSIN HASN'T STRUCK IN A WHILE, WE HAVE A LOUD INTIMIDATOR.
IF THAT IS AN INDIVIDUAL'S POWER, WE CAN'T DEFEND AGAINST IT ONCE TARGETED.
IS MY ONLY OPTION TO BE WARY?!
NO… I'VE DONE ALL THAT I COULD TO MAKE DOUBLY SURE.
HELPLESSNESS WILL ONLY BE DETRIMENTAL TO MY NEN.
THE ENEMY IN AN ENDURANCE RACE…
…IS ONESELF.

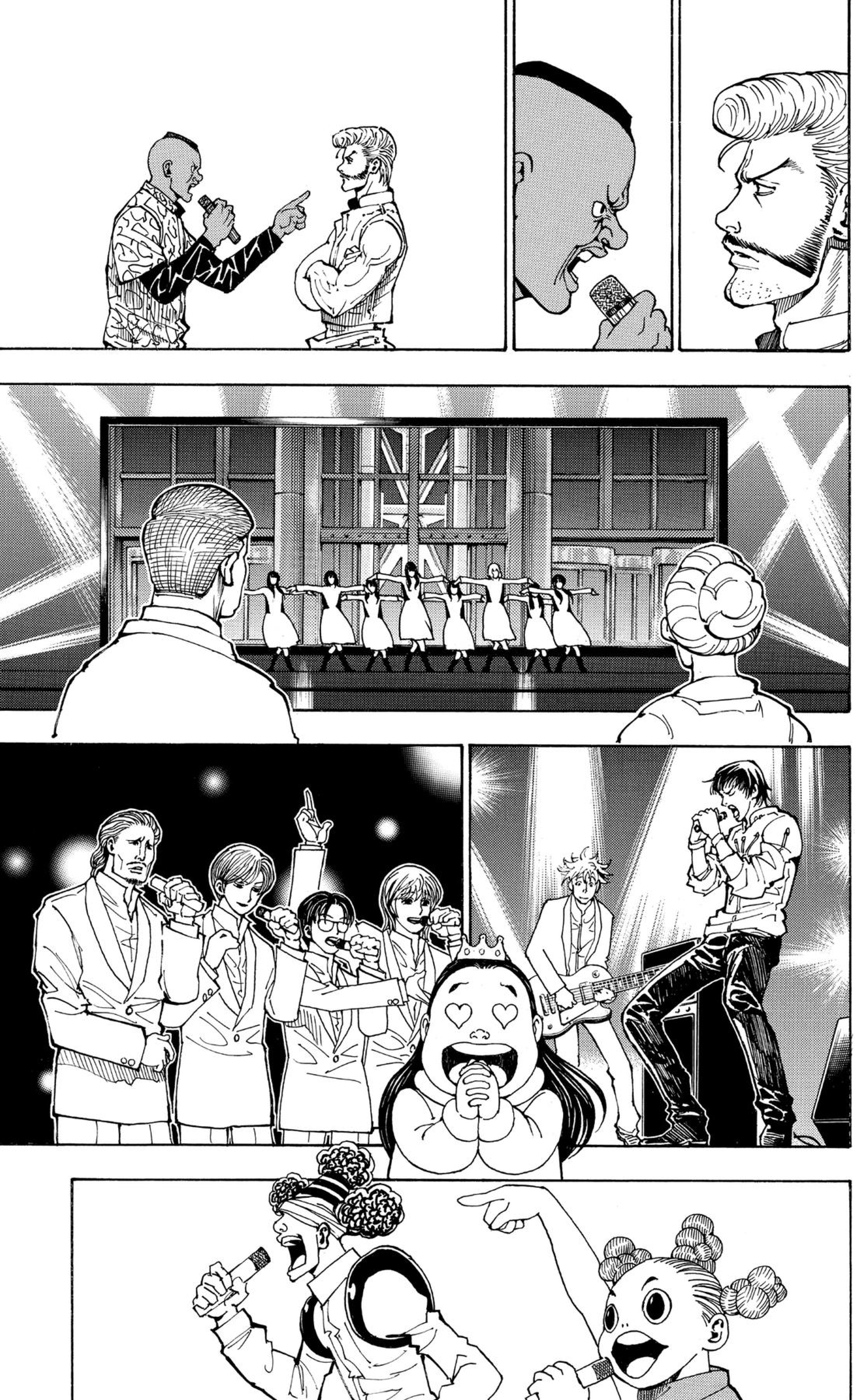


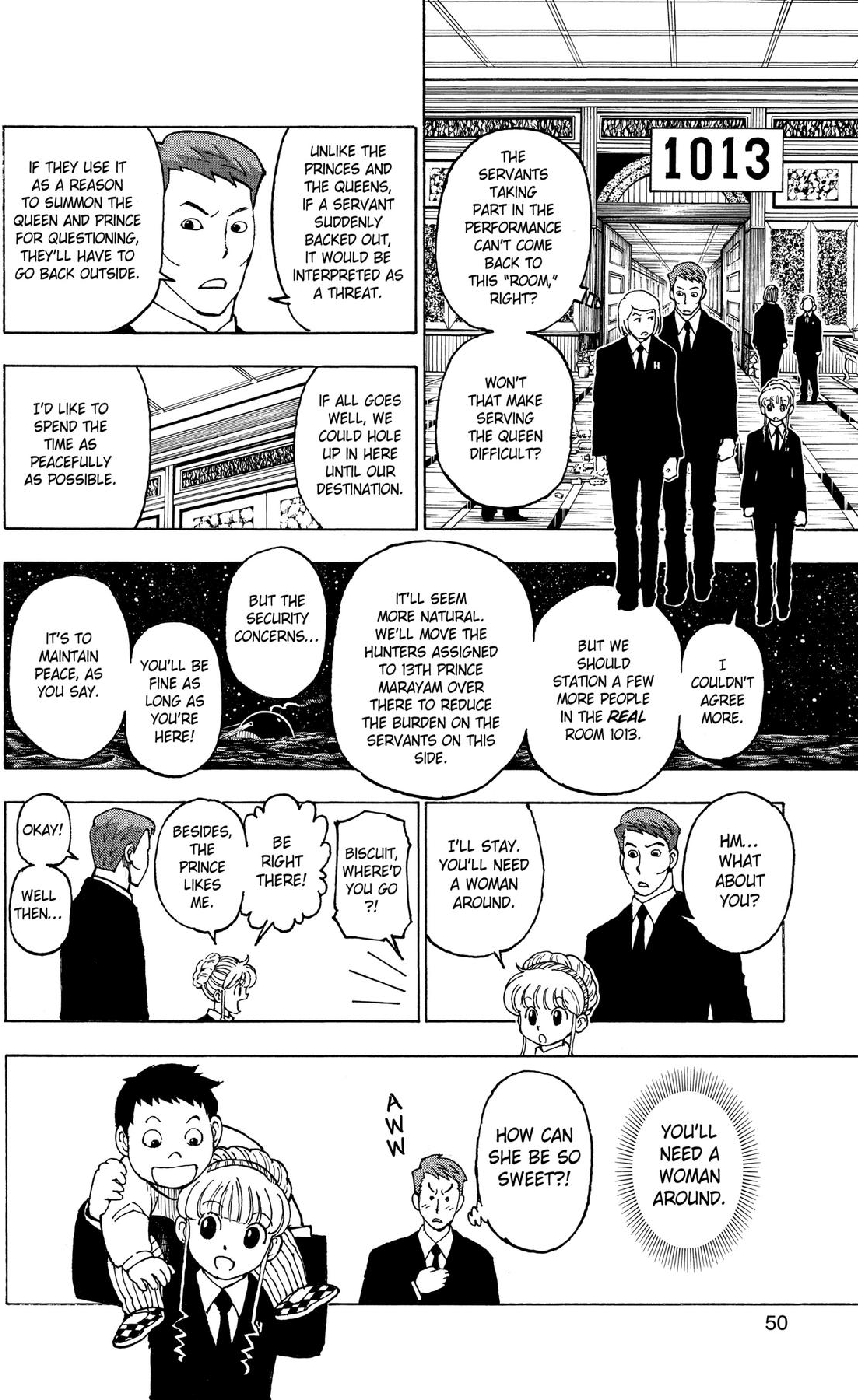

EIGHTH DAY: 8:00 P.M.
THE BANQUET BEGINS.

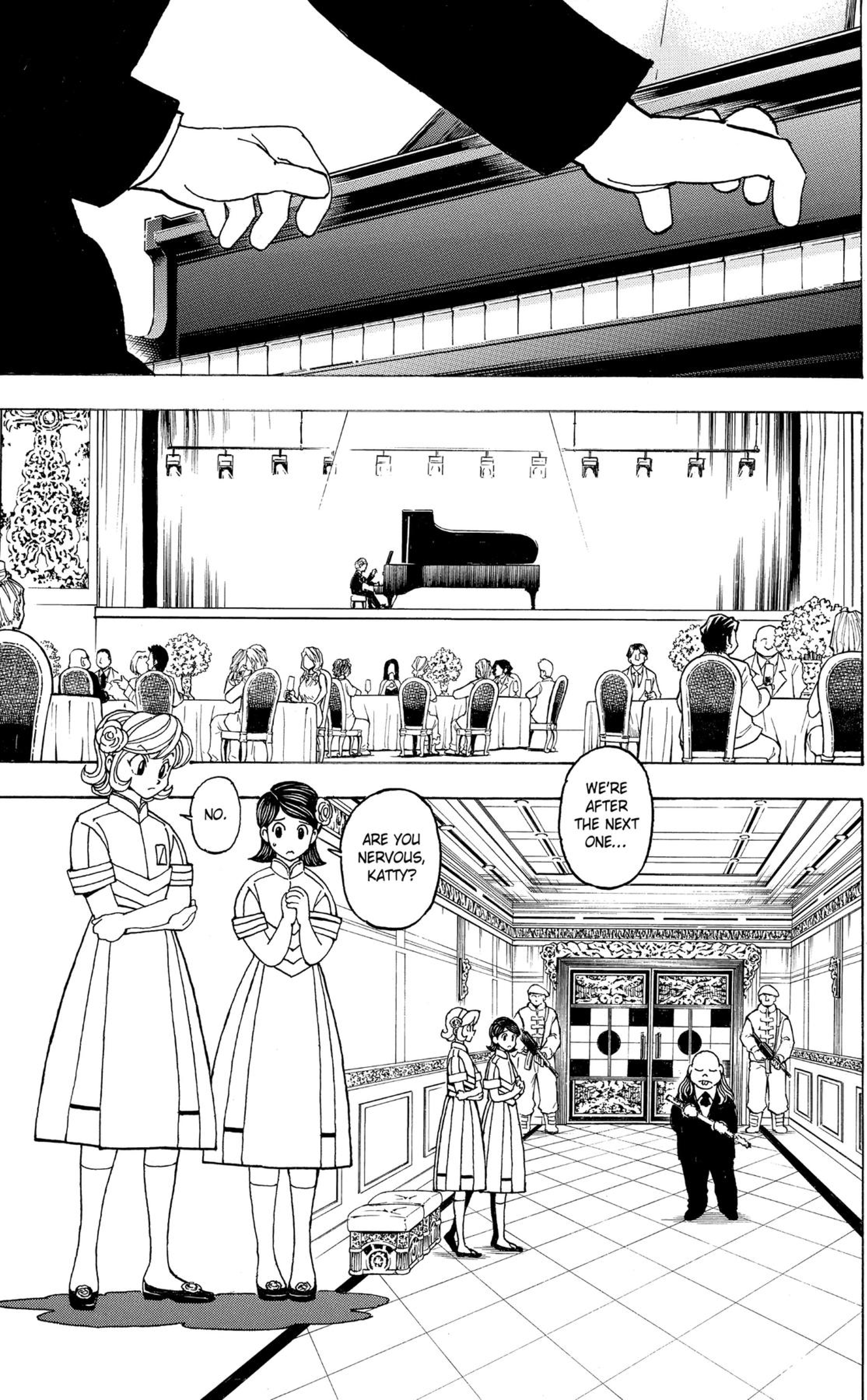
Chapter 383: Escape

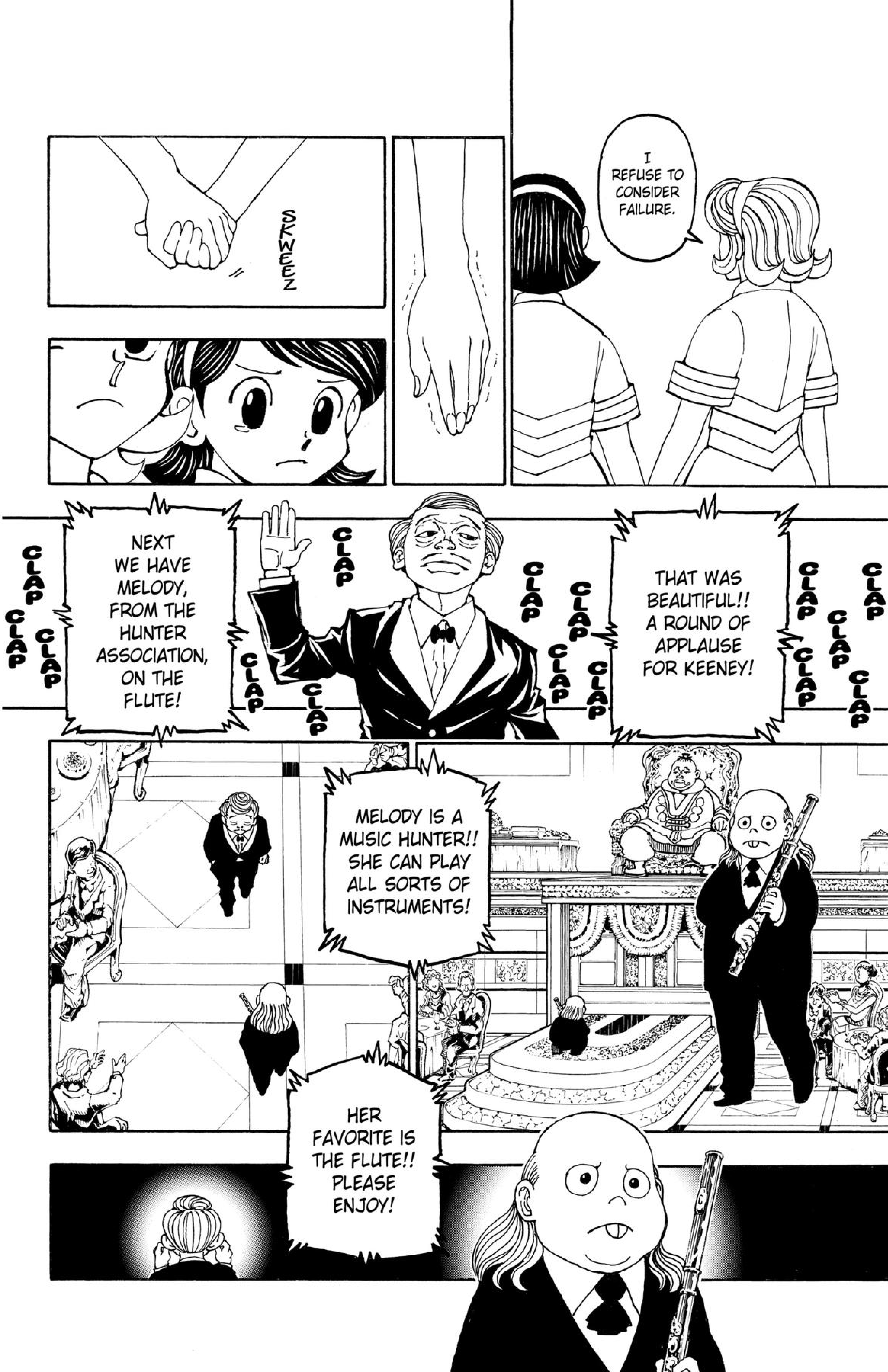

AND NOW IT'S TIME TO BEGIN THE VERY FIRST SUNDAY BANQUET!
WE HAVE PLANNED A CONCERT HOSTED BY THE ROYAL FAMILY!!
I MUST REGRETFULLY INFORM YOU THAT WE HAVE A LAST-MINUTE PROGRAM CHANGE.
EIGHTH PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ, WHO DECLARED HE WOULD CHANGE THE WORLD WITH HIS PERFORMANCE TONIGHT, HAS TAKEN ILL AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PERFORM.
BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY FABULOUS PERFORMANCES IN TONIGHT'S PROGRAM.
PLEASE ENJOY!

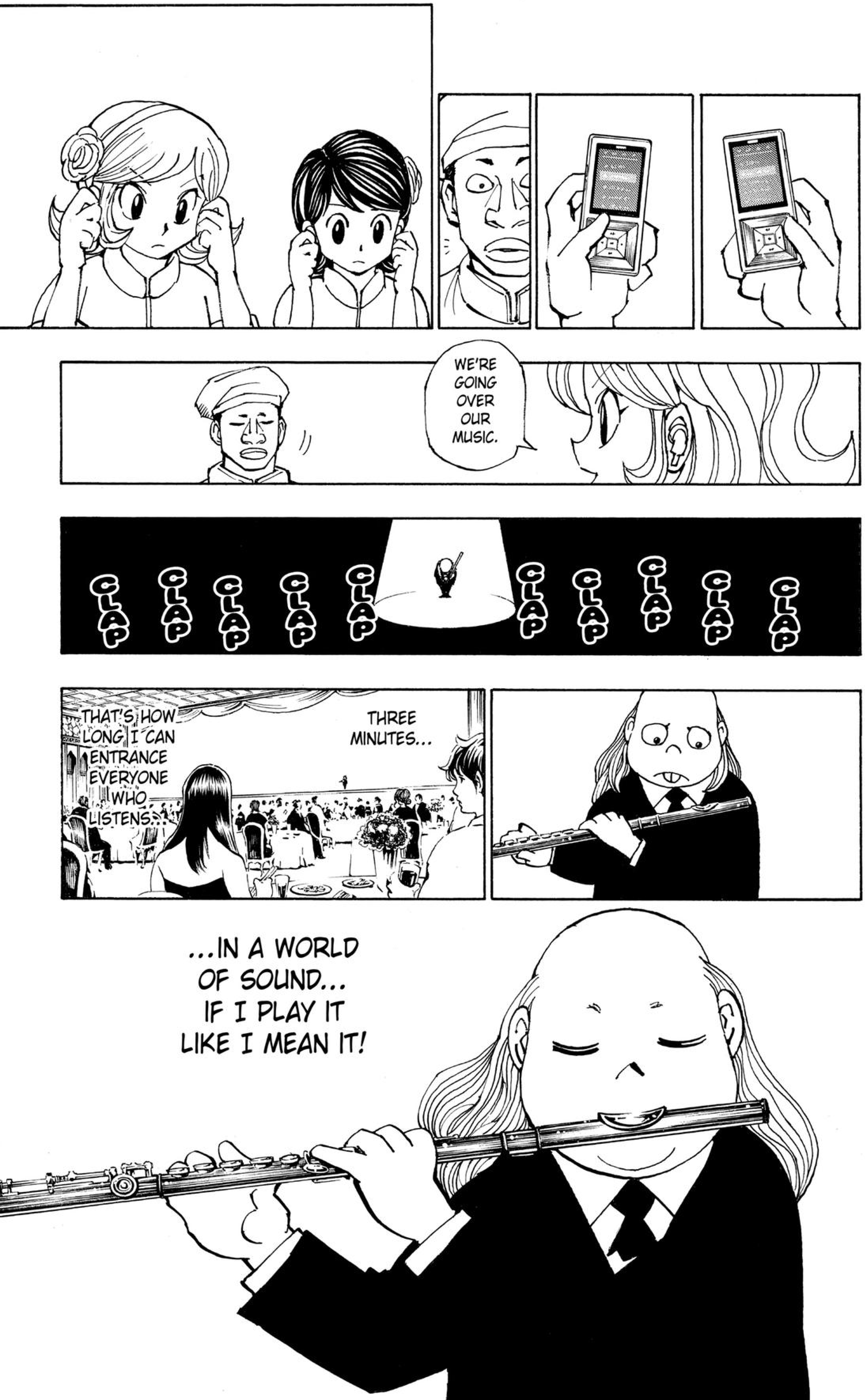

SO THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CHANGES IN THE PROGRAM. WE APOLOGIZE.
JUST FEWER ACTS, WHICH MOVES UP THE STARTING TIME FOR THE SECOND HALF.
SOUNDS LIKE AN HONOR TO BE THE HEADLINER.
THERE ARE NO CHANGES IN THE ORDER OF PERFORMANCES.
THE FIRST AND SECOND PRINCES, PROBABLY NEN USERS, AREN'T HERE EITHER. FEWER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT.
THEN THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS.
WHY ME?
PRINCE'S ORDERS.
NINETY MINUTES UNTIL EXECUTION OF THE PLAN!
PROGRAM
FREESTYLE RAP BATTLE: BASHO & RIDGE (HUNTER ASSOCIATION)
DANCE PERFORMANCE: STAFF
ROCK BAND: IZUNAVI AND GIULIANO (HUNTER ASSOCIATION)
ACAPELLA CHORUS: SIXTH PRINCE'S PERSONAL GUARDS
INTERMISSION
TALK SHOW: TAMAZO AND GANTAI
PIANO SOLO: KEENEY (HUNTER ASSOCIATION)
FLUTE SOLO: MELODY (HUNTER ASSOCIATION)
GLASS HARP PERFORMANCE: TENTH AND ELEVENTH PRINCES

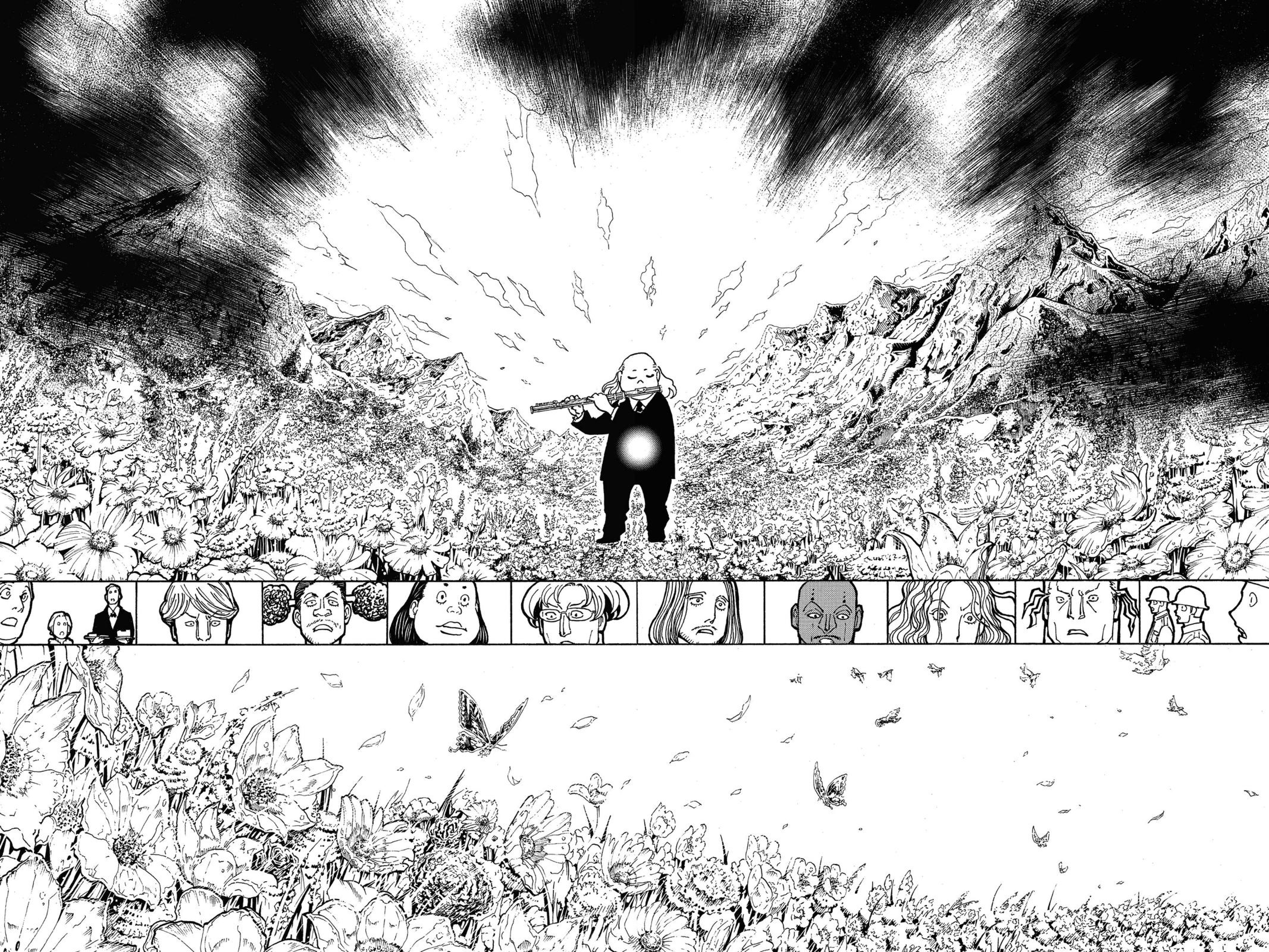


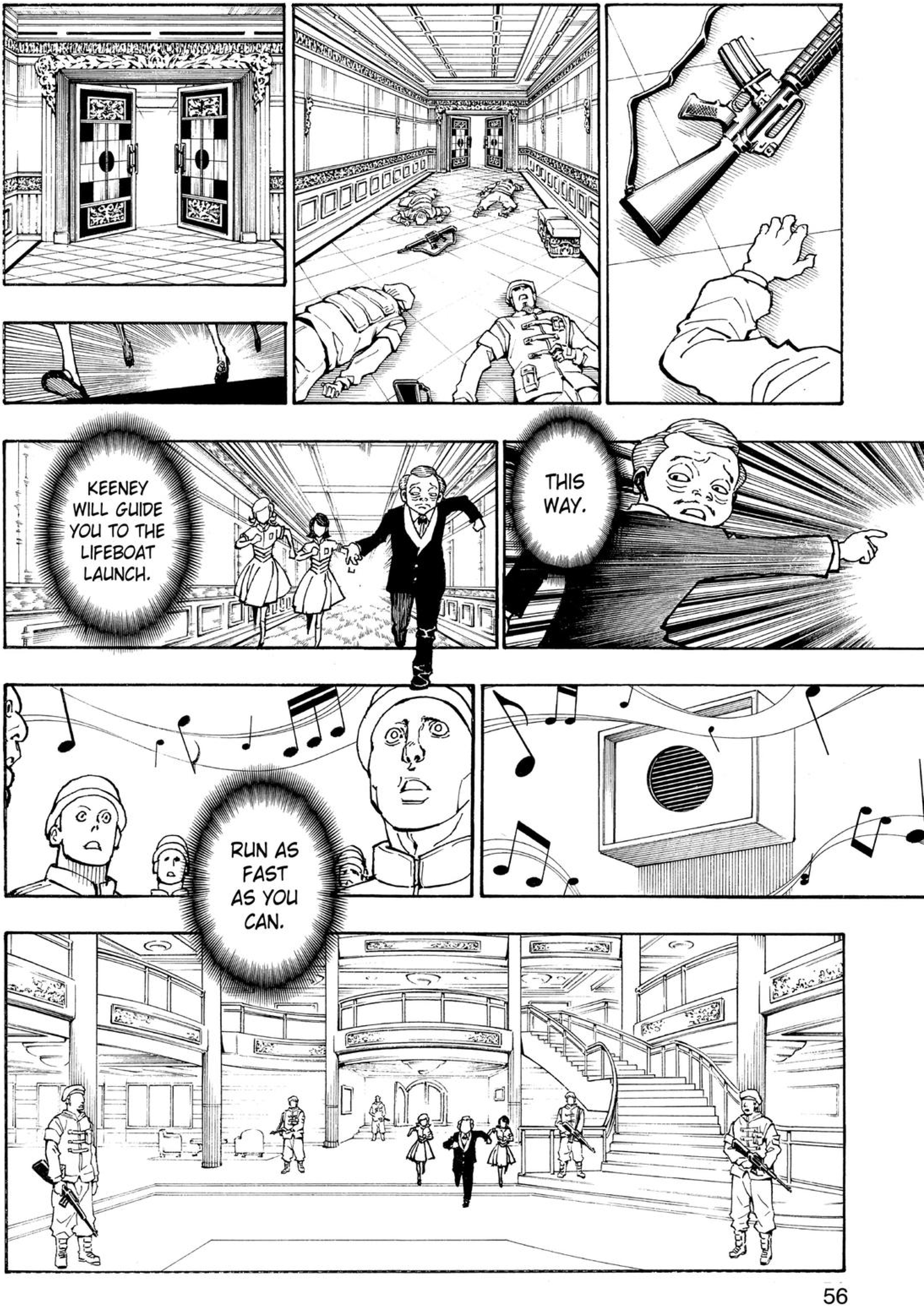

1013
THE SERVANTS TAKING PART IN THE PERFORMANCE CAN'T COME BACK TO THIS "ROOM," RIGHT?
WON'T THAT MAKE SERVING THE QUEEN DIFFICULT?
UNLIKE THE PRINCES AND THE QUEENS, IF A SERVANT SUDDENLY BACKED OUT, IT WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS A THREAT.
IF THEY USE IT AS A REASON TO SUMMON THE QUEEN AND PRINCE FOR QUESTIONING, THEY'LL HAVE TO GO BACK OUTSIDE.
IF ALL GOES WELL, WE COULD HOLE UP IN HERE UNTIL OUR DESTINATION.
I'D LIKE TO SPEND THE TIME AS PEACEFULLY AS POSSIBLE.
I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.
BUT WE SHOULD STATION A FEW MORE PEOPLE IN THE **REAL** ROOM 1013.
IT'LL SEEM MORE NATURAL. WE'LL MOVE THE HUNTERS ASSIGNED TO 13TH PRINCE MARAYAM OVER THERE TO REDUCE THE BURDEN ON THE SERVANTS ON THIS SIDE.
BUT THE SECURITY CONCERNS...
YOU'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE!
IT'S TO MAINTAIN PEACE, AS YOU SAY.
HM... WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I'LL STAY. YOU'LL NEED A WOMAN AROUND.
BISCUIT, WHERE'D YOU GO?!
BE RIGHT THERE!
BESIDES, THE PRINCE LIKES ME.
OKAY!
WELL THEN...
YOU'LL NEED A WOMAN AROUND.
HOW CAN SHE BE SO SWEET?!
AWW

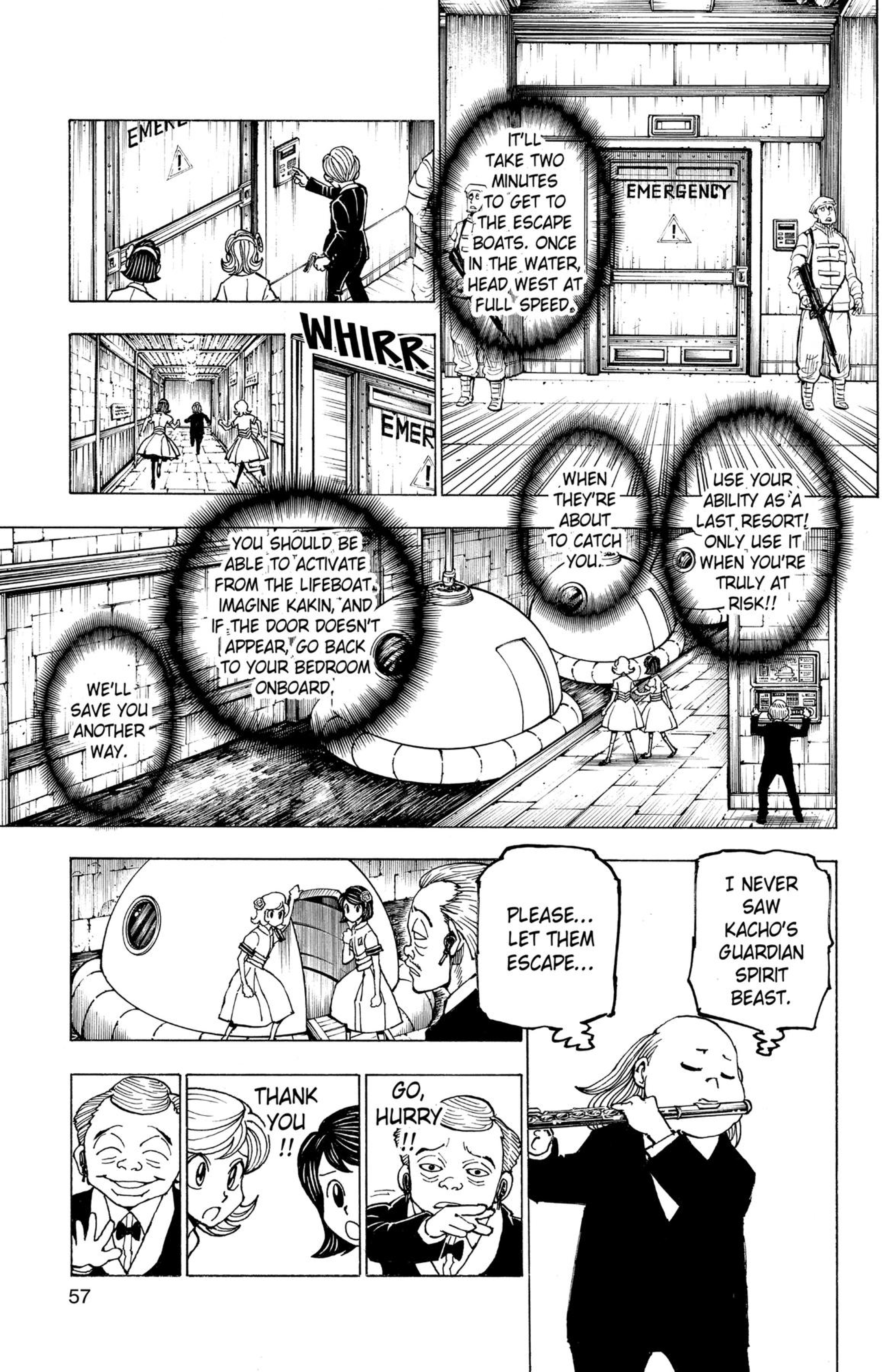

WE'RE AFTER THE NEXT ONE...
ARE YOU NERVOUS, KATTY?
NO.

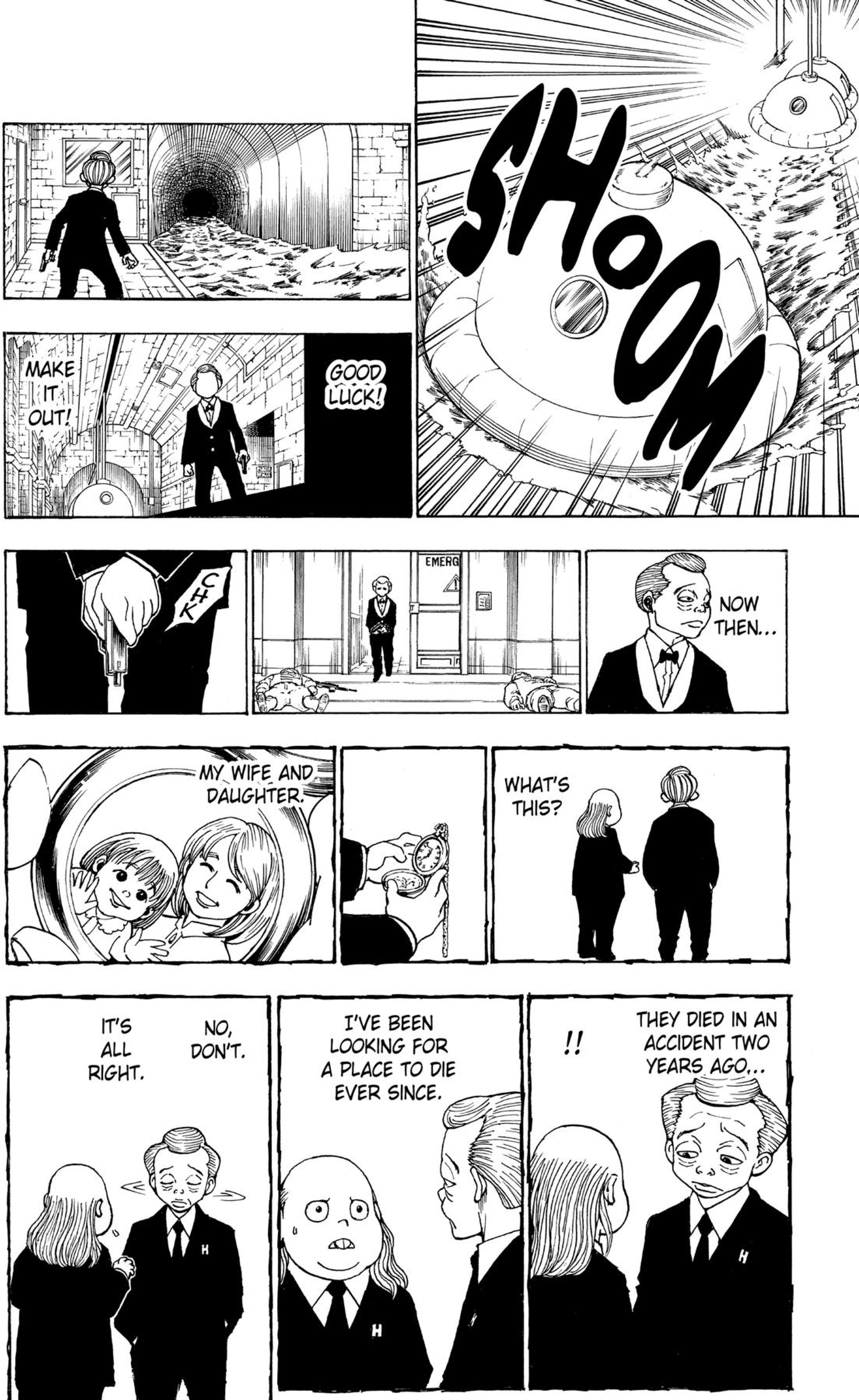

I REFUSE TO CONSIDER FAILURE.
SKWEEZ
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL!! A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR KEENEY!
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
NEXT WE HAVE MELODY, FROM THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION, ON THE FLUTE!
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
MELODY IS A MUSIC HUNTER!! SHE CAN PLAY ALL SORTS OF INSTRUMENTS!
HER FAVORITE IS THE FLUTE!! PLEASE ENJOY!

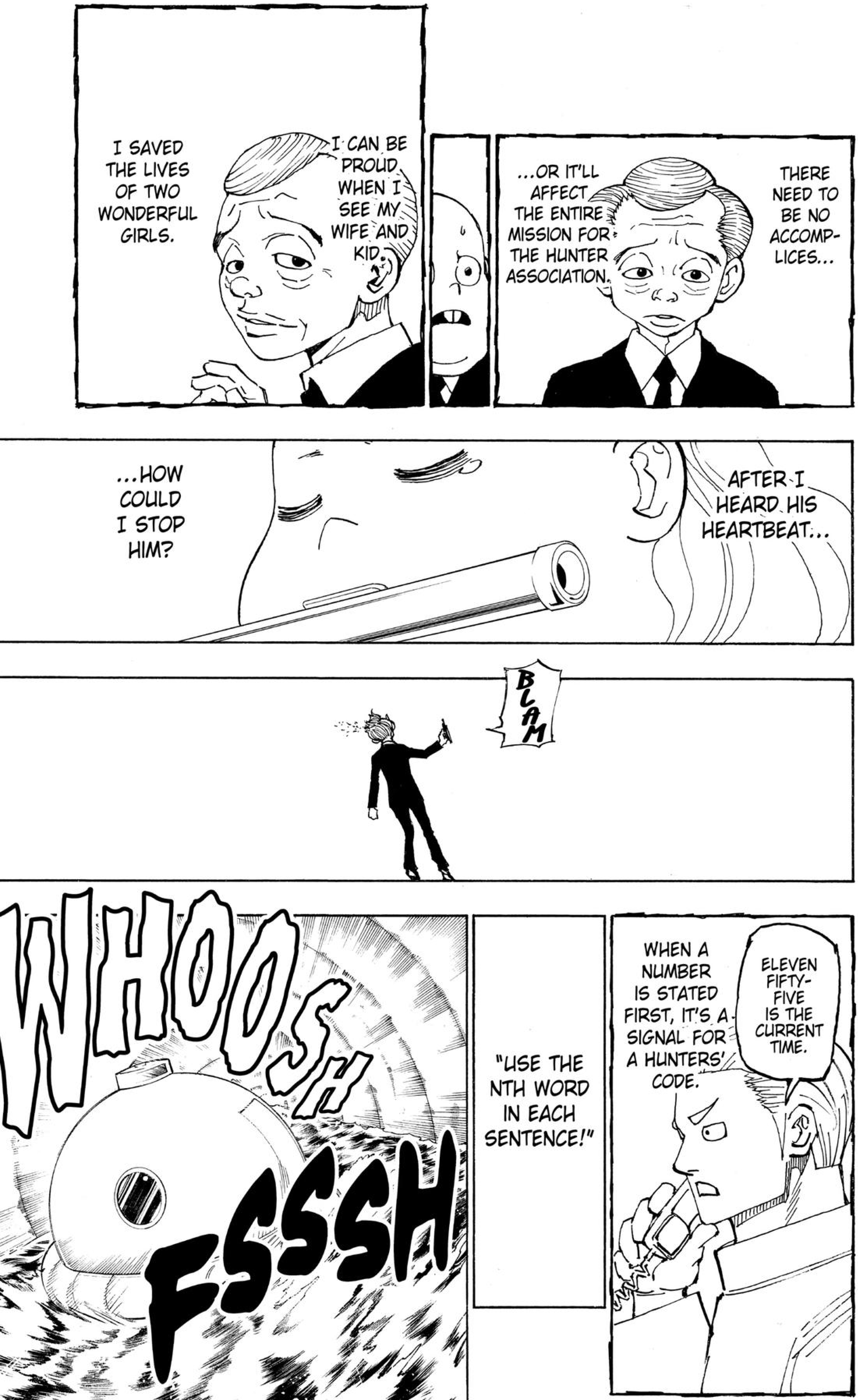

WE'RE GOING OVER OUR MUSIC.
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
THREE MINUTES...
THAT'S HOW LONG I CAN ENTRANCE EVERYONE WHO LISTENS...
...IN A WORLD OF SOUND... IF I PLAY IT LIKE I MEAN IT!

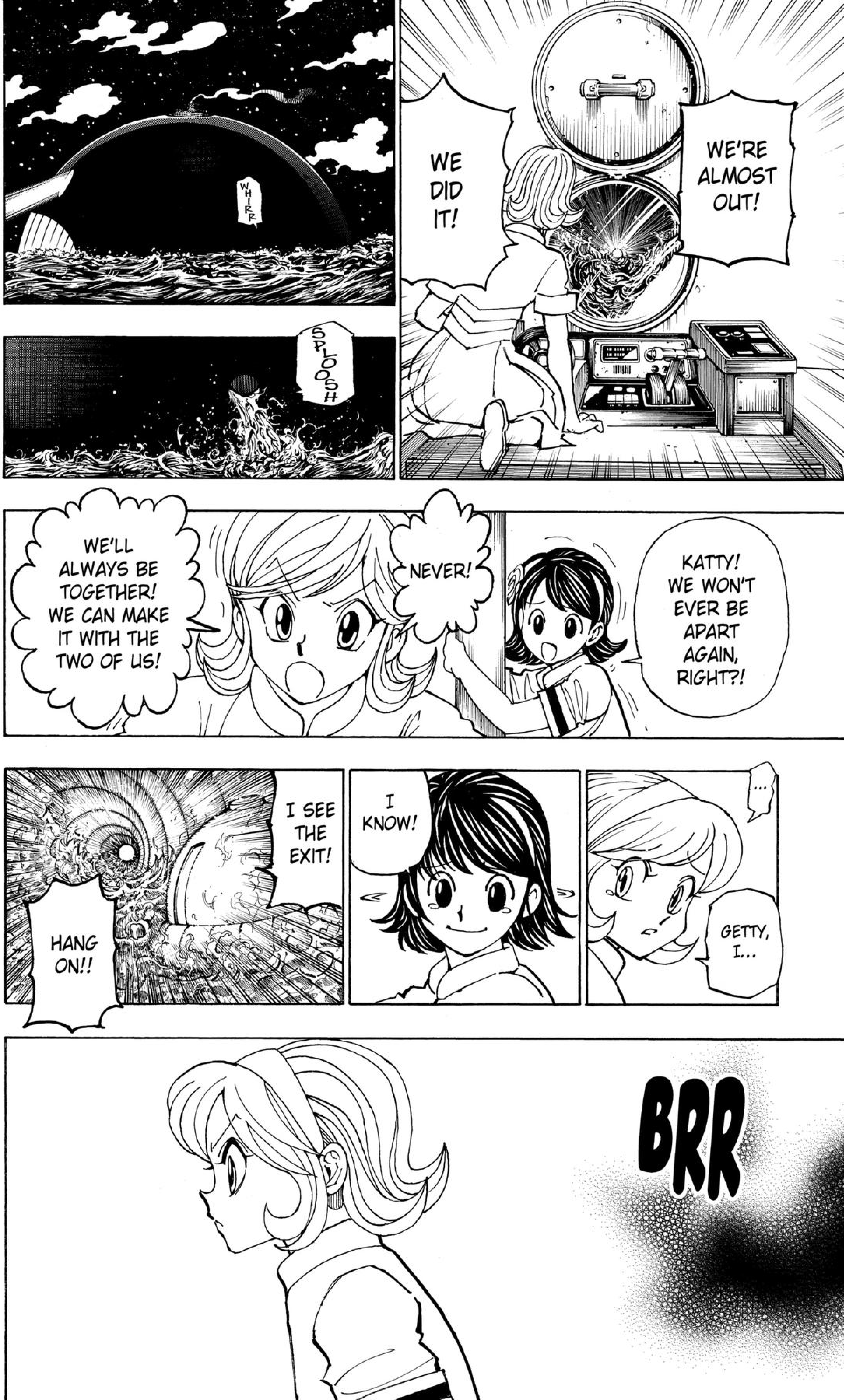


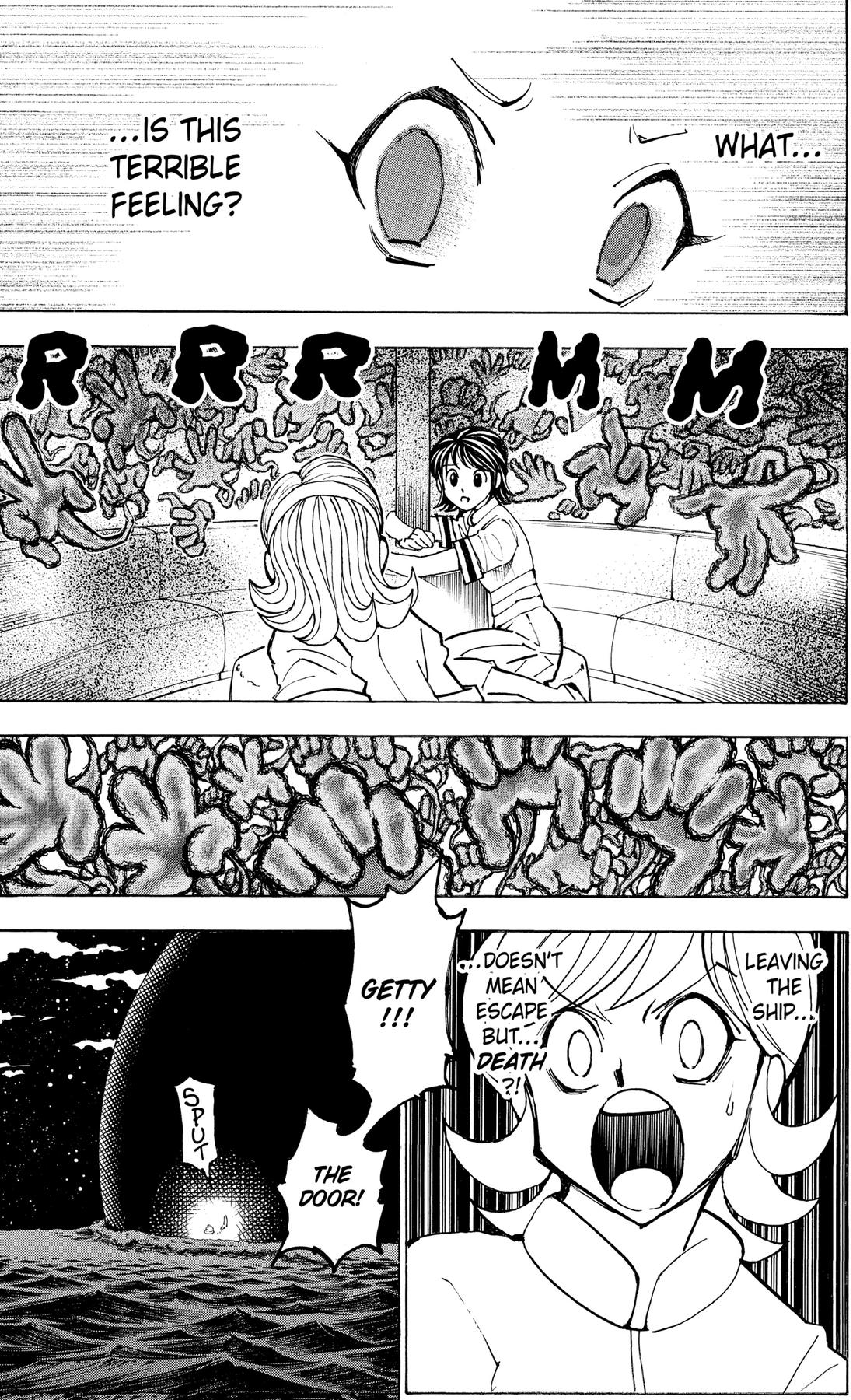

KEENEY WILL GUIDE YOU TO THE LIFEBOAT LAUNCH.
THIS WAY.
RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN.

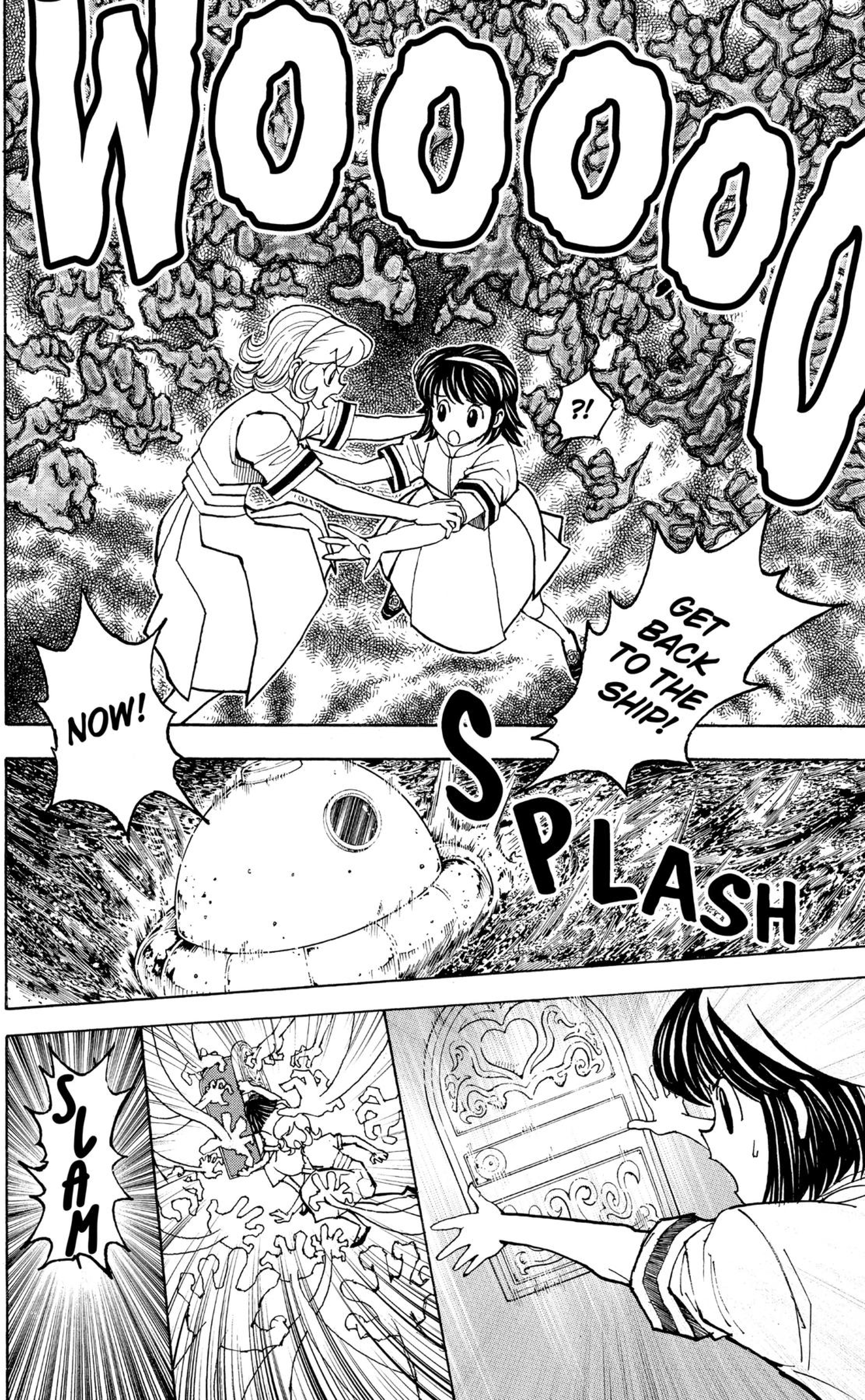

EMERGENCY
IT'LL TAKE TWO MINUTES TO GET TO THE ESCAPE BOATS. ONCE IN THE WATER, HEAD WEST AT FULL SPEED.
EMERE
WHIRR
EMER
USE YOUR ABILITY AS A LAST RESORT! ONLY USE IT WHEN YOU'RE TRULY AT RISK!!
WHEN THEY'RE ABOUT TO CATCH YOU.
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO ACTIVATE FROM THE LIFEBOAT. IMAGINE KAKIN, AND IF THE DOOR DOESN'T APPEAR, GO BACK TO YOUR BEDROOM ONBOARD.
WE'LL SAVE YOU ANOTHER WAY.
I NEVER SAW KACHO'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST.
PLEASE... LET THEM ESCAPE...
GO, HURRY!!
THANK YOU!!

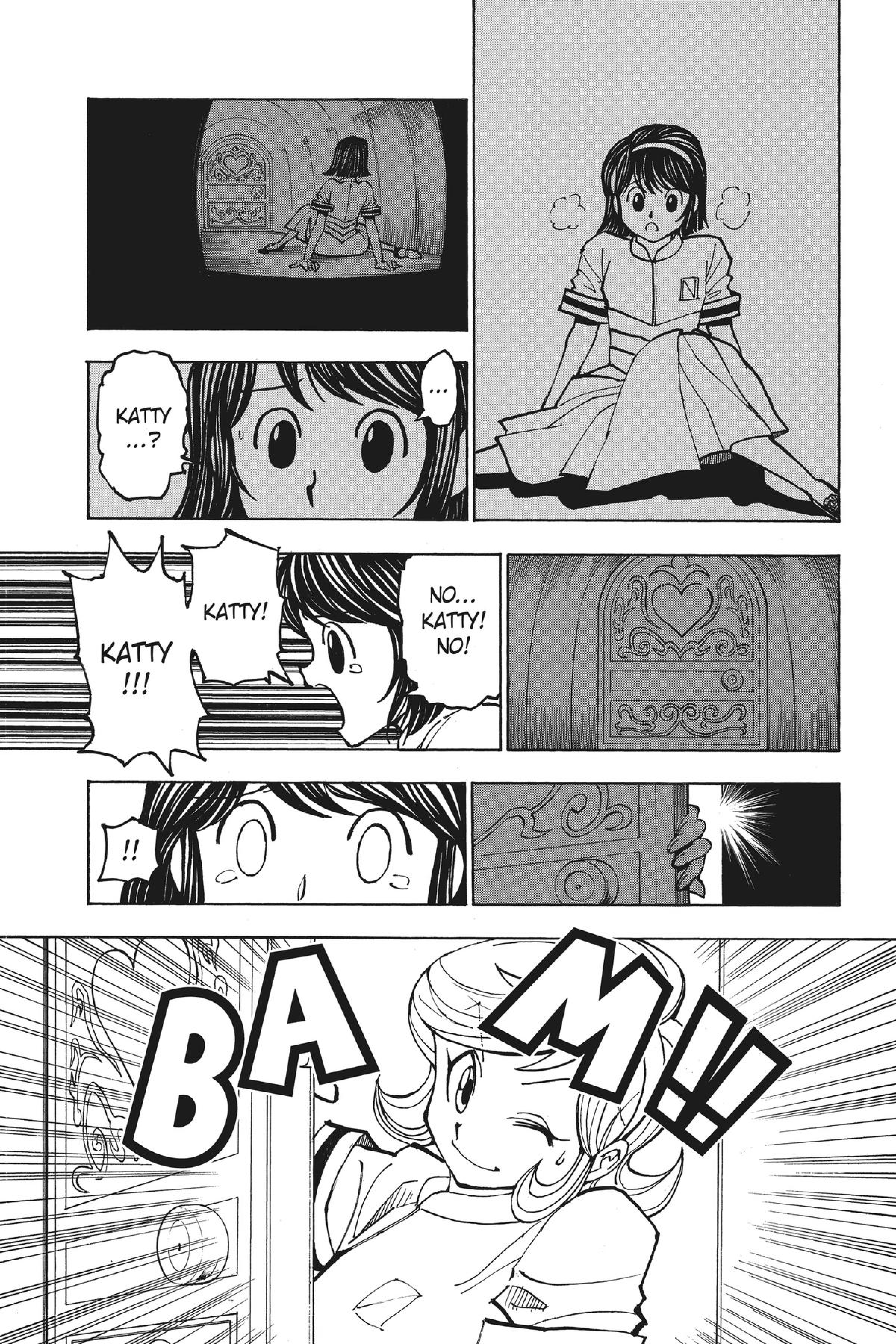

SHOOM
GOOD LUCK!
MAKE IT OUT!
NOW THEN...
EMERG
CHK
WHAT'S THIS?
MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER.
THEY DIED IN AN ACCIDENT TWO YEARS AGO...
!!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO DIE EVER SINCE.
NO, DON'T.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

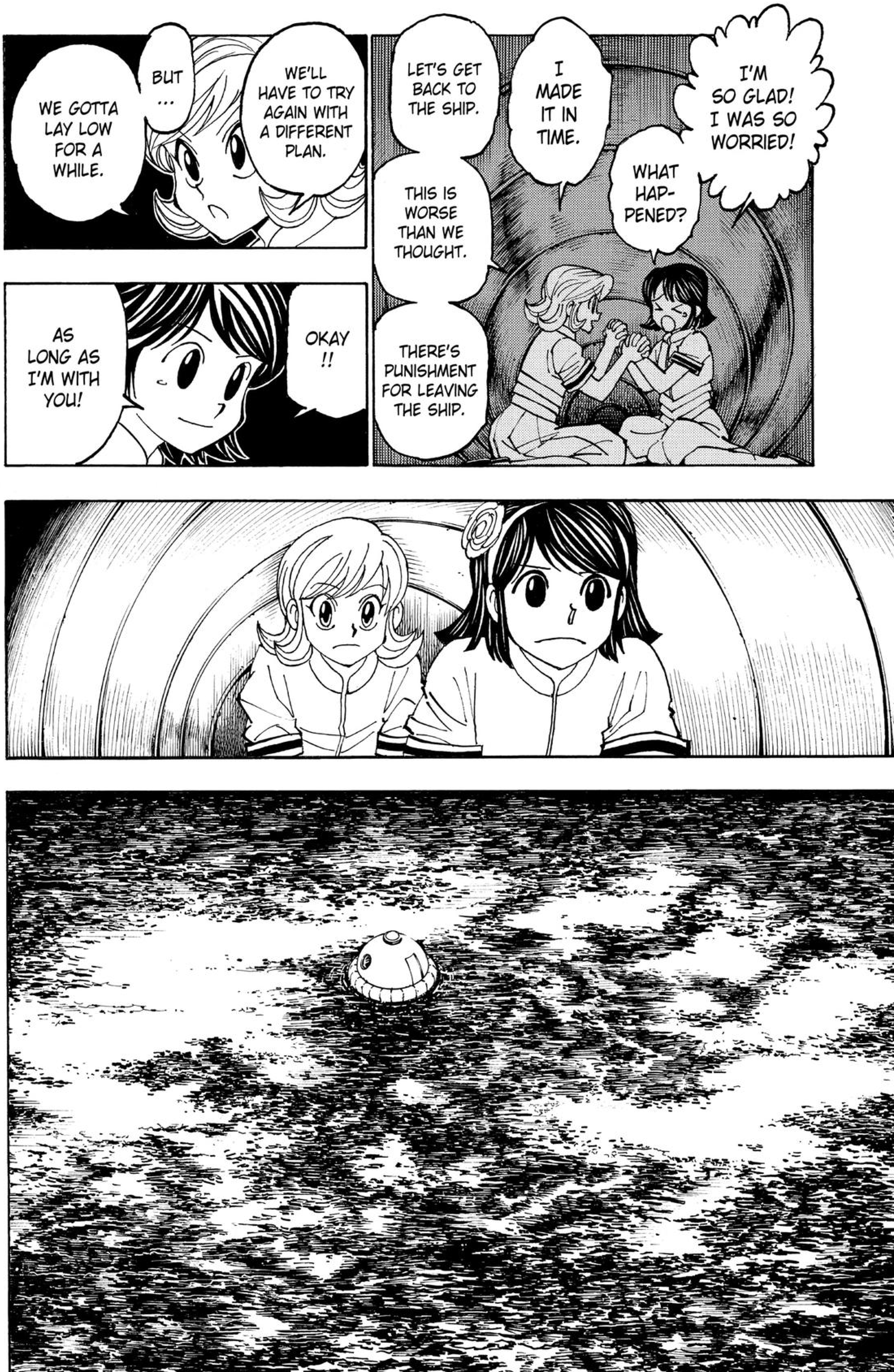

THERE NEED TO BE NO ACCOMPLICES...
...OR IT'LL AFFECT THE ENTIRE MISSION FOR THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION.
I CAN BE PROUD WHEN I SEE MY WIFE AND KID.
I SAVED THE LIVES OF TWO WONDERFUL GIRLS.
AFTER I HEARD HIS HEARTBEAT...
...HOW COULD I STOP HIM?
BLAM
ELEVEN FIFTY-FIVE IS THE CURRENT TIME.
WHEN A NUMBER IS STATED FIRST, IT'S A SIGNAL FOR A HUNTERS' CODE.
"USE THE NTH WORD IN EACH SENTENCE!"
WHOOSH
FSSSH

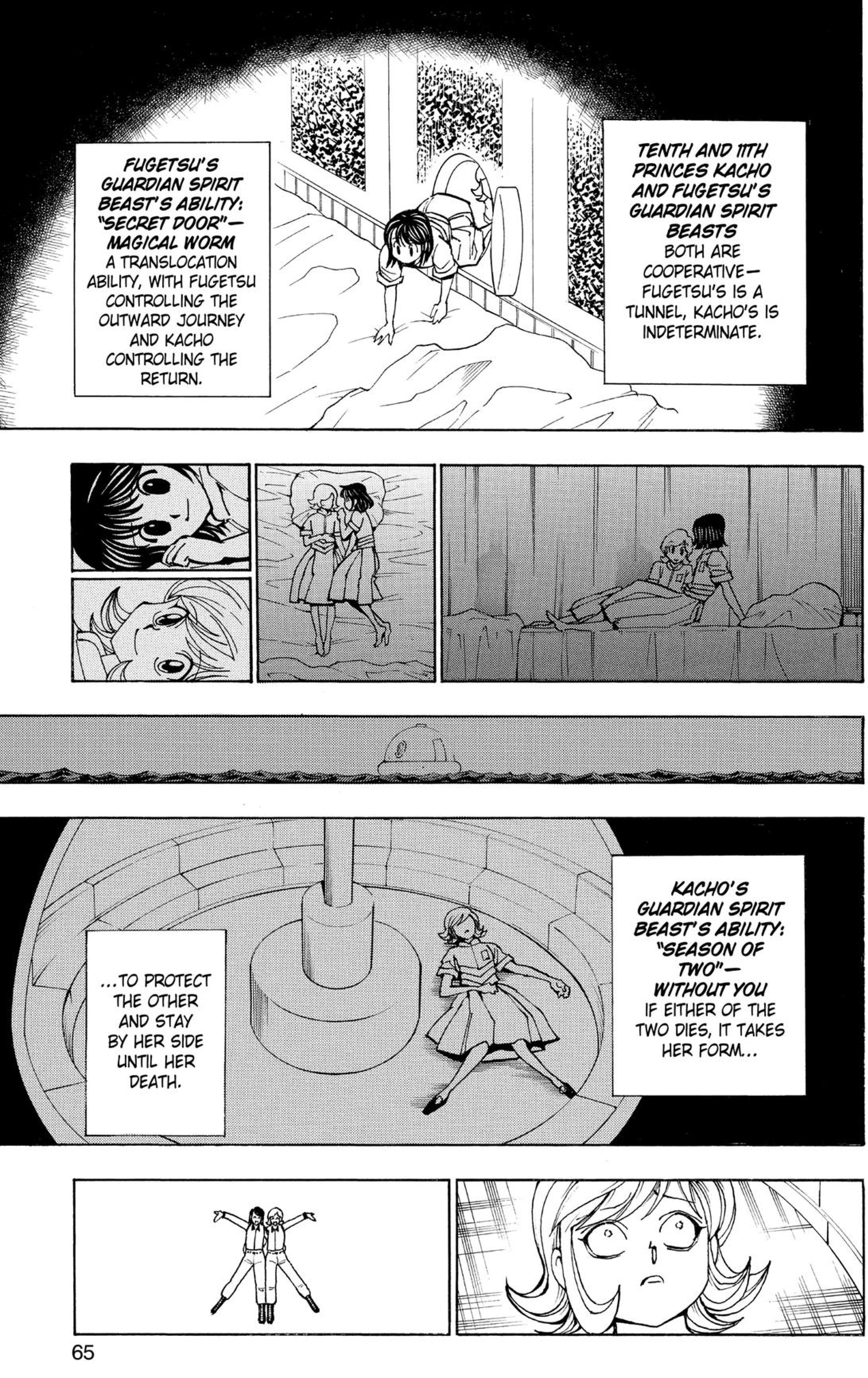

WE'RE ALMOST OUT!
WE DID IT!
WHIRR
SPLOOSH
KATTY! WE WON'T EVER BE APART AGAIN, RIGHT?!
NEVER!
WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER! WE CAN MAKE IT WITH THE TWO OF US!
...
GETTY, I...
I KNOW!
I SEE THE EXIT!
HANG ON!!
BRR


WHAT...
...IS THIS TERRIBLE FEELING?
RRRRMM
LEAVING THE SHIP...
...DOESN'T MEAN ESCAPE BUT... DEATH?!
GETTY!!!
SPUT
THE DOOR!

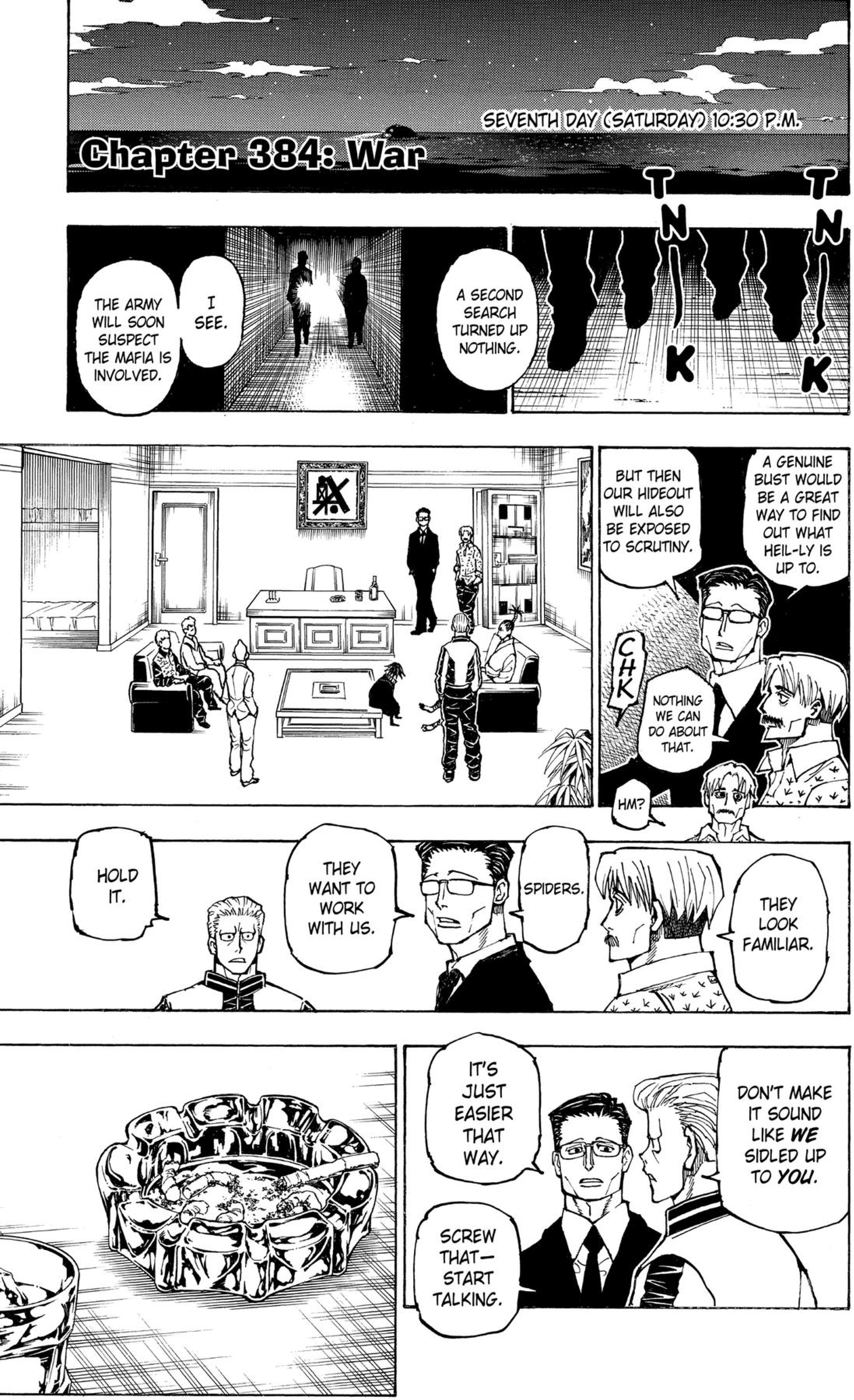

WOOOOO
?!
GET BACK TO THE SHIP!
NOW!
SPLASH
SLAM

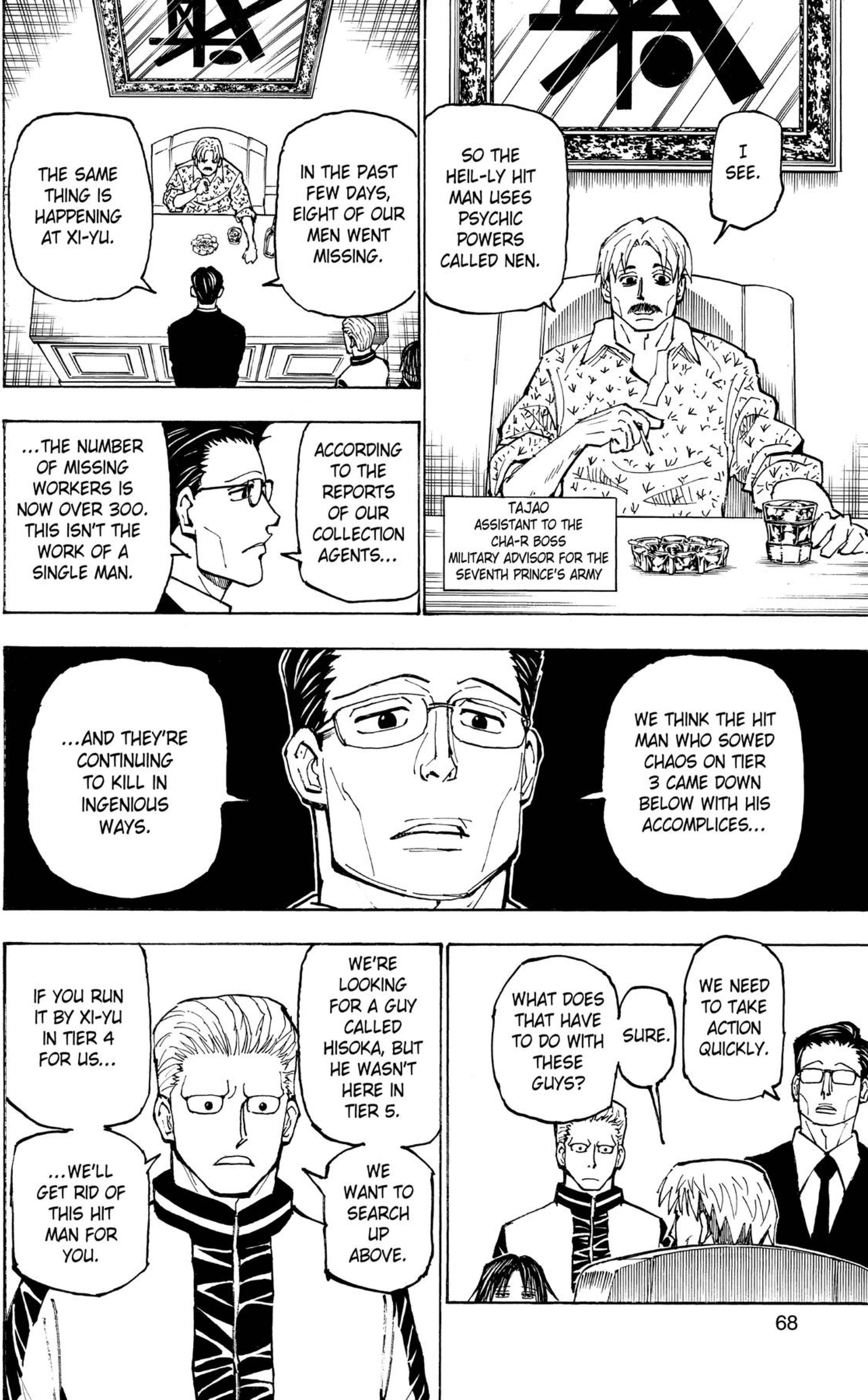

...
KATTY ...?
NO... KATTY! NO!
KATTY!
KATTY !!!
!!
BAM!!

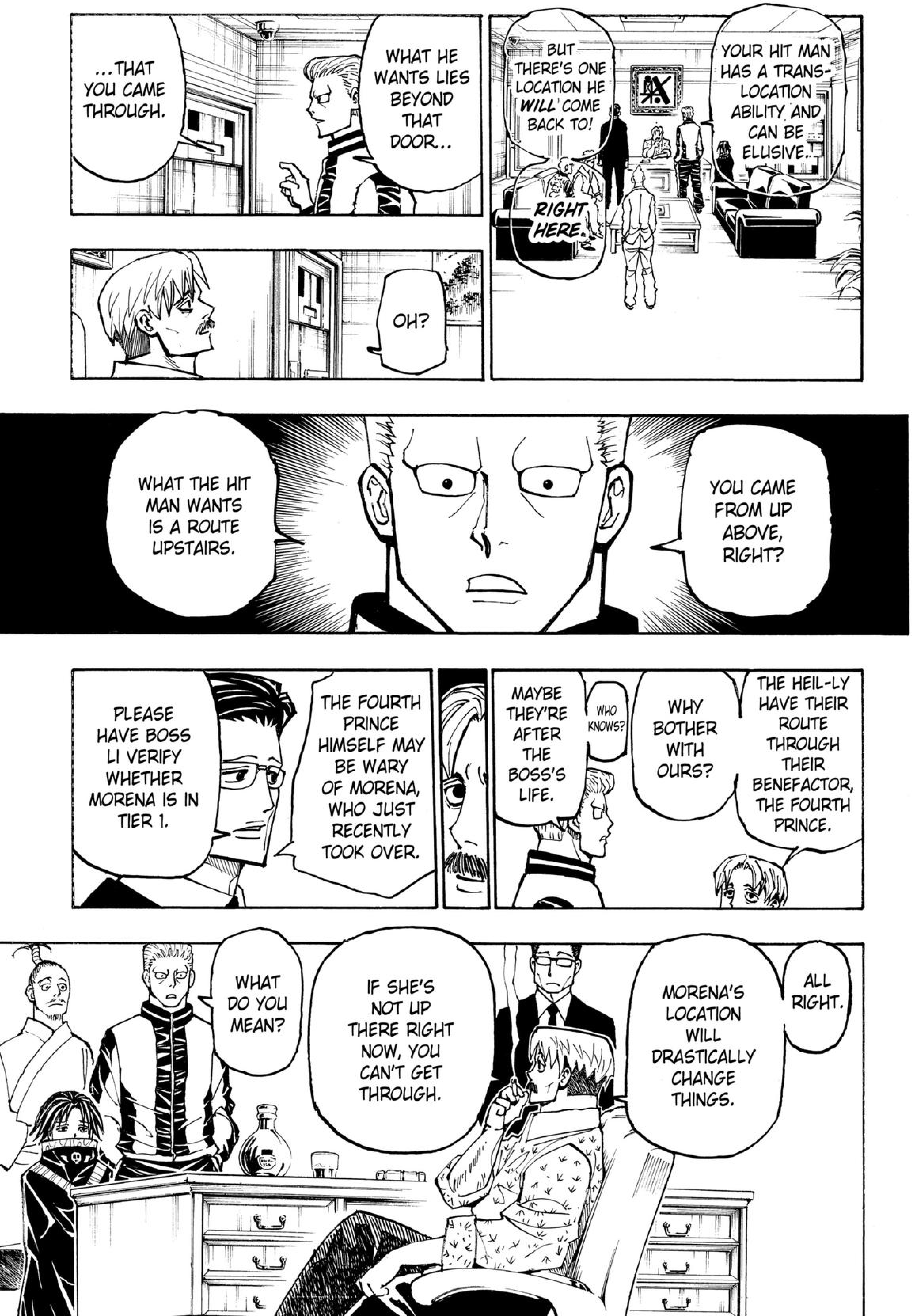

I'M SO GLAD! I WAS SO WORRIED!
WHAT HAPPENED?
I MADE IT IN TIME.
LET'S GET BACK TO THE SHIP.
THIS IS WORSE THAN WE THOUGHT.
THERE'S PUNISHMENT FOR LEAVING THE SHIP.
WE'LL HAVE TO TRY AGAIN WITH A DIFFERENT PLAN.
BUT ...
WE GOTTA LAY LOW FOR A WHILE.
OKAY !!
AS LONG AS I'M WITH YOU!

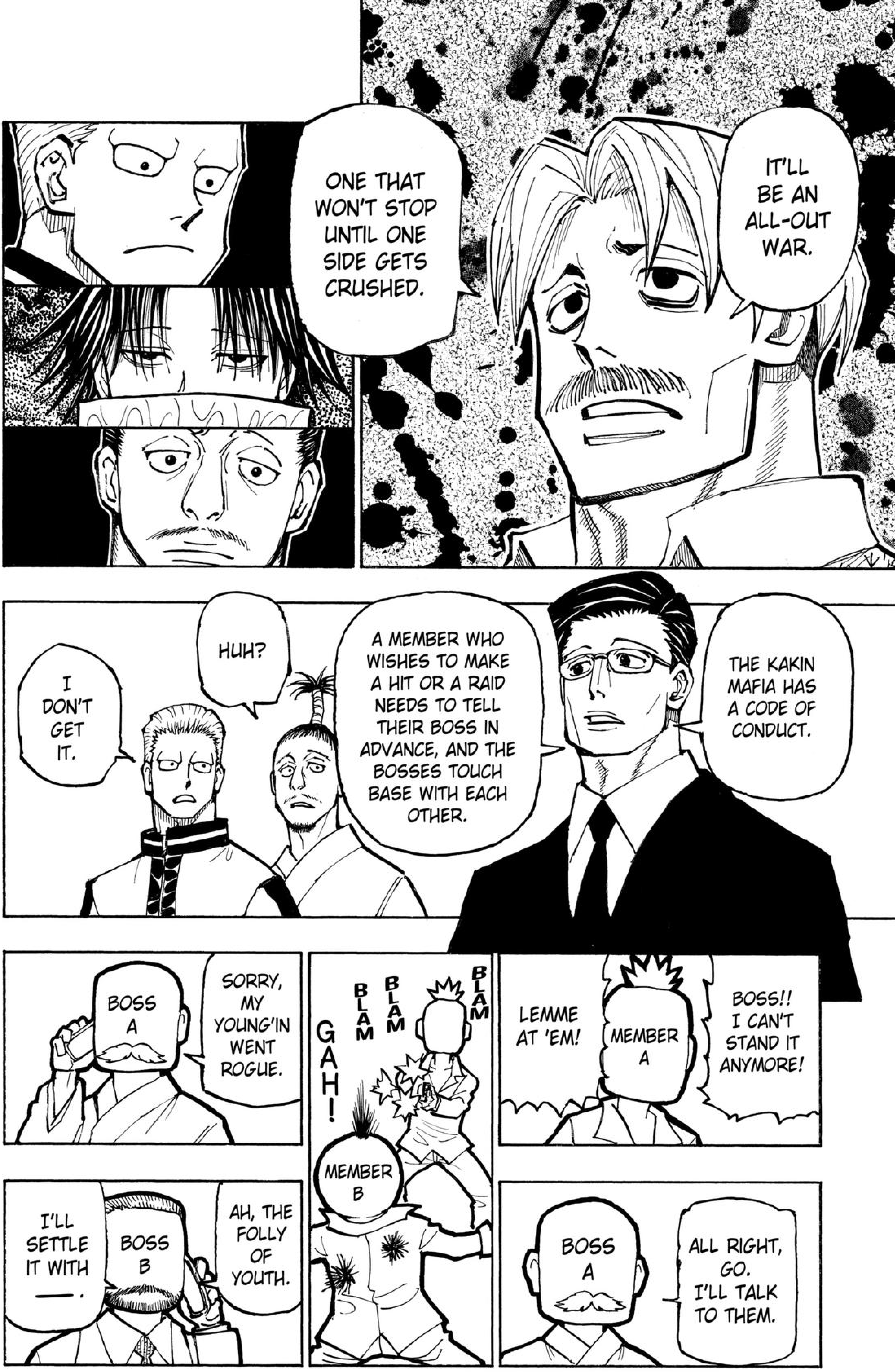

TENTH AND 11TH PRINCES KACHO AND FUGETSU'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEASTS
BOTH ARE COOPERATIVE—FUGETSU'S IS A TUNNEL, KACHO'S IS INDETERMINATE.
FUGETSU'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST'S ABILITY: "SECRET DOOR"—MAGICAL WORM
A TRANSLOCATION ABILITY, WITH FUGETSU CONTROLLING THE OUTWARD JOURNEY AND KACHO CONTROLLING THE RETURN.
KACHO'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST'S ABILITY: "SEASON OF TWO"—WITHOUT YOU
IF EITHER OF THE TWO DIES, IT TAKES HER FORM...
...TO PROTECT THE OTHER AND STAY BY HER SIDE UNTIL HER DEATH.

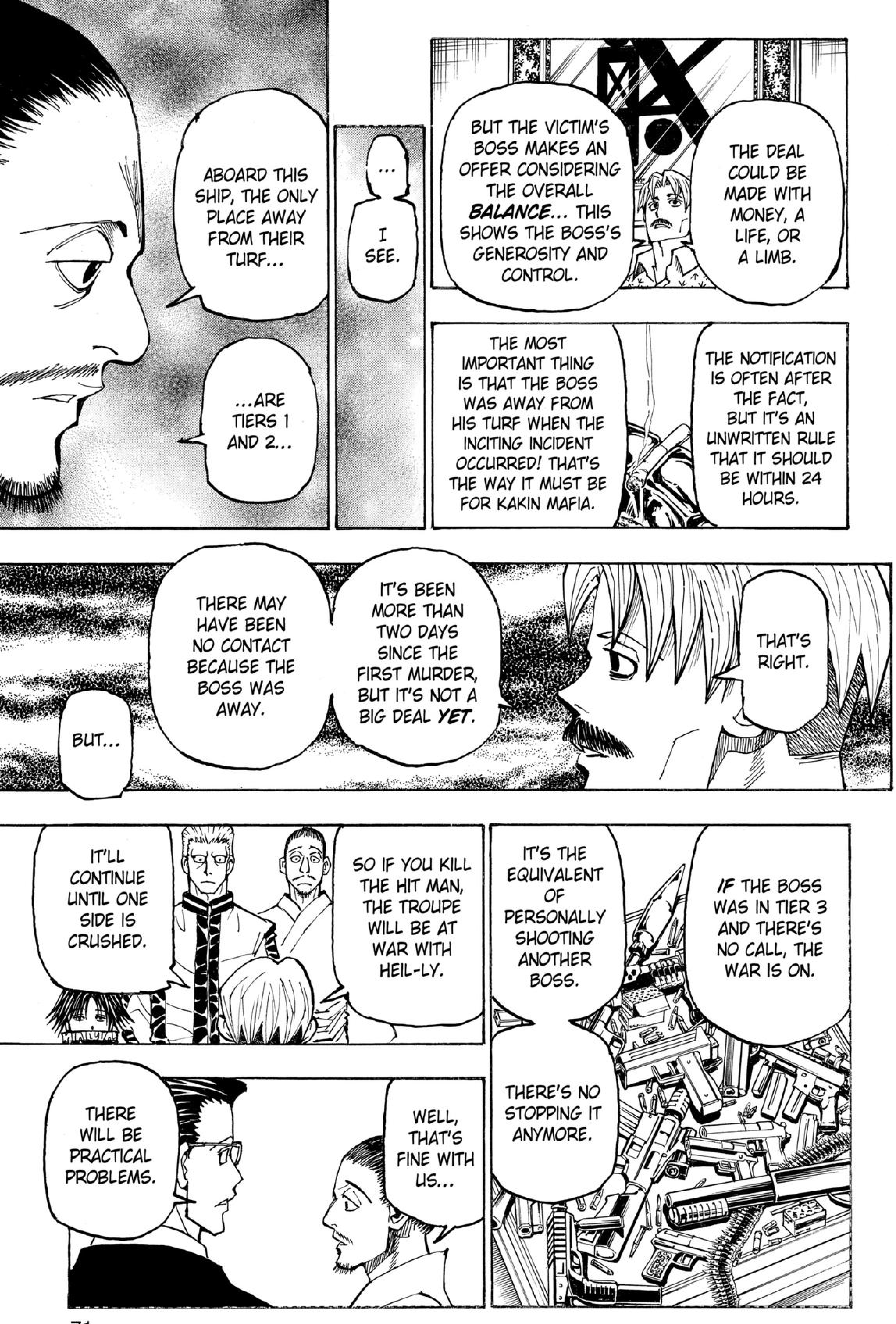
Chapter 384: War

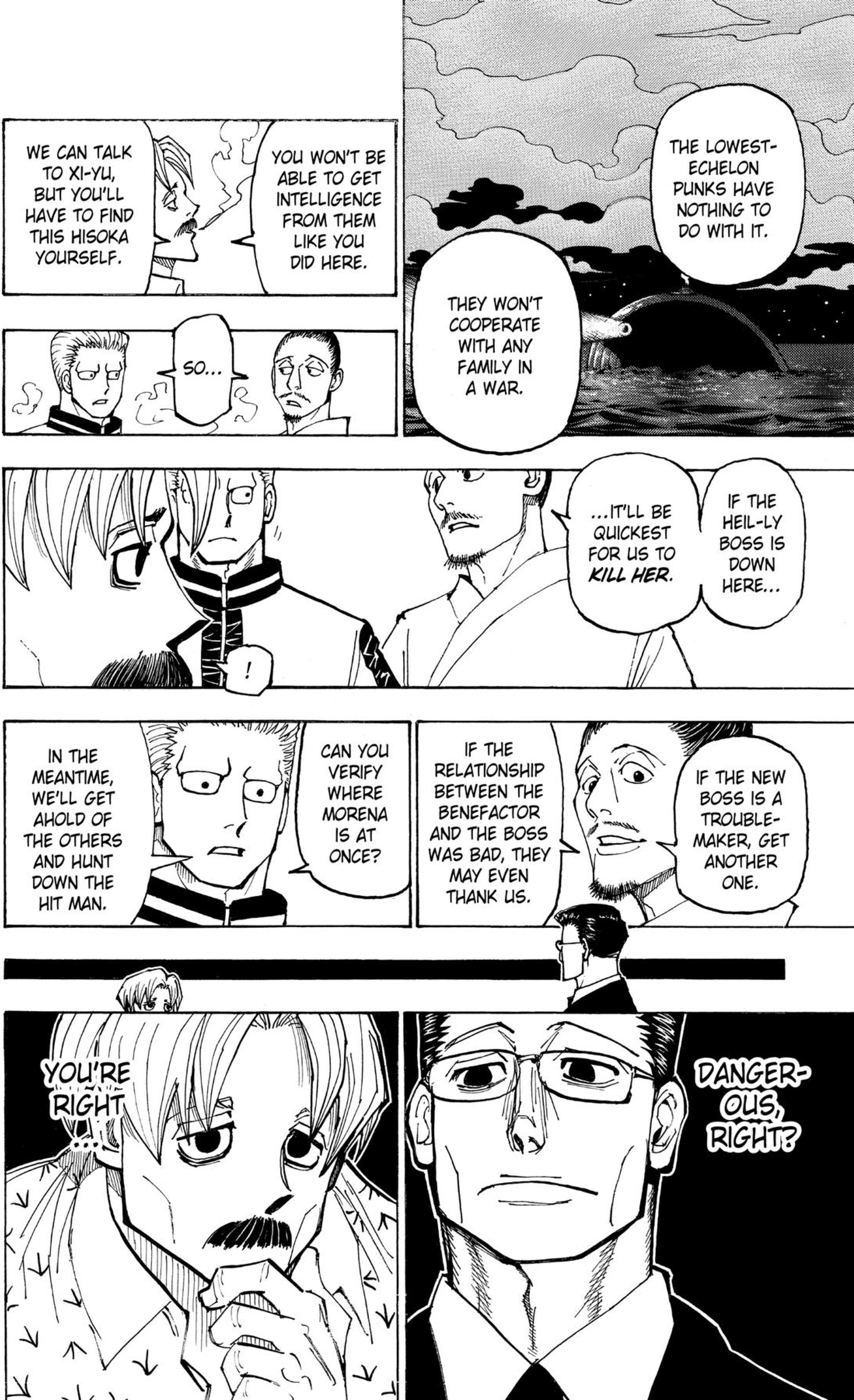

SEVENTH DAY (SATURDAY) 10:30 P.M.
TNK
TNK
A SECOND SEARCH TURNED UP NOTHING.
I SEE.
THE ARMY WILL SOON SUSPECT THE MAFIA IS INVOLVED.
A GENUINE BUST WOULD BE A GREAT WAY TO FIND OUT WHAT HEIL-LY IS UP TO.
BUT THEN OUR HIDEOUT WILL ALSO BE EXPOSED TO SCRUTINY.
NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT.
CHK
HM?
THEY LOOK FAMILIAR.
SPIDERS.
THEY WANT TO WORK WITH US.
HOLD IT.
DON'T MAKE IT SOUND LIKE *WE* SIDLED UP TO *YOU*.
IT'S JUST EASIER THAT WAY.
SCREW THAT— START TALKING.

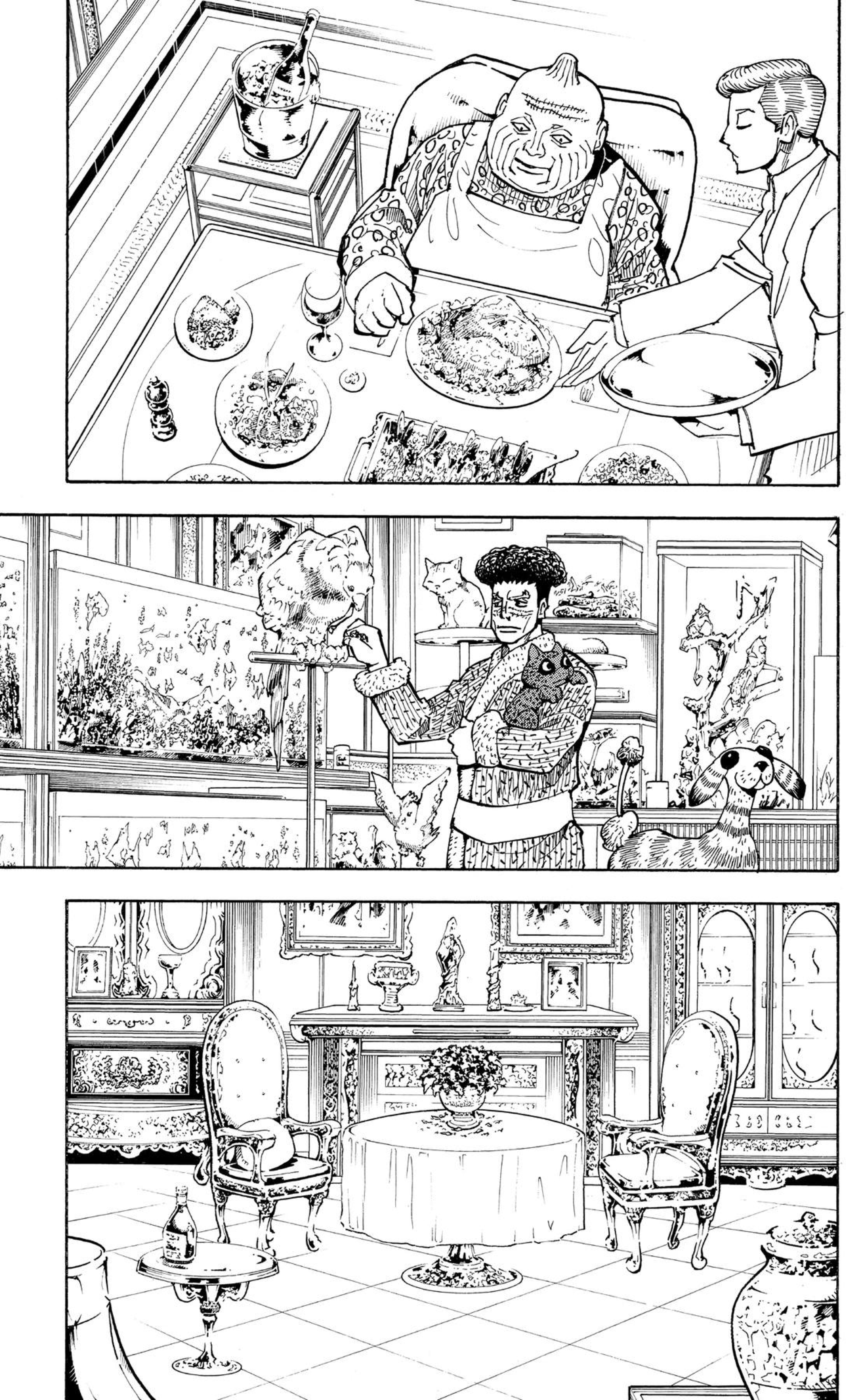

I SEE.
SO THE HEIL-LY HIT MAN USES PSYCHIC POWERS CALLED NEN.
TAJAO
ASSISTANT TO THE
CHA-R BOSS
MILITARY ADVISOR FOR THE
SEVENTH PRINCE'S ARMY
IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, EIGHT OF OUR MEN WENT MISSING.
THE SAME THING IS HAPPENING AT XI-YU.
ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS OF OUR COLLECTION AGENTS...
...THE NUMBER OF MISSING WORKERS IS NOW OVER 300. THIS ISN'T THE WORK OF A SINGLE MAN.
WE THINK THE HIT MAN WHO SOWED CHAOS ON TIER 3 CAME DOWN BELOW WITH HIS ACCOMPLICES...
...AND THEY'RE CONTINUING TO KILL IN INGENIOUS WAYS.
WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION QUICKLY.
SURE.
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THESE GUYS?
WE'RE LOOKING FOR A GUY CALLED HISOKA, BUT HE WASN'T HERE IN TIER 5.
WE WANT TO SEARCH UP ABOVE.
IF YOU RUN IT BY XI-YU IN TIER 4 FOR US...
...WE'LL GET RID OF THIS HIT MAN FOR YOU.

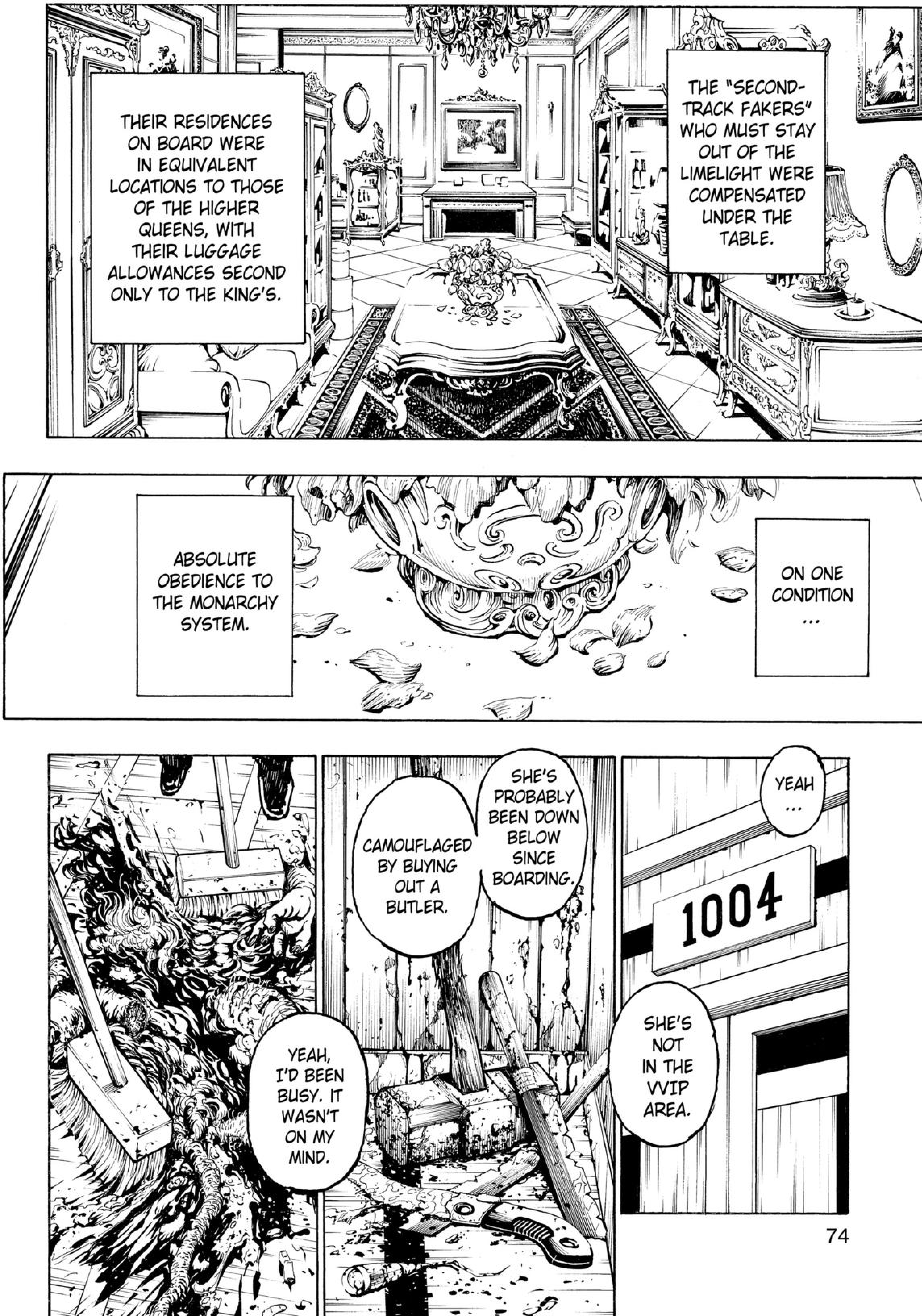

YOUR HIT MAN HAS A TRANSLOCATION ABILITY AND CAN BE ELUSIVE..
BUT THERE'S ONE LOCATION HE *WILL* COME BACK TO!
RIGHT HERE.
WHAT HE WANTS LIES BEYOND THAT DOOR...
...THAT YOU CAME THROUGH.
OH?
YOU CAME FROM UP ABOVE, RIGHT?
WHAT THE HIT MAN WANTS IS A ROUTE UPSTAIRS.
THE HEIL-LY HAVE THEIR ROUTE THROUGH THEIR BENEFACTOR, THE FOURTH PRINCE.
WHY BOTHER WITH OURS?
WHO KNOWS?
MAYBE THEY'RE AFTER THE BOSS'S LIFE.
THE FOURTH PRINCE HIMSELF MAY BE WARY OF MORENA, WHO JUST RECENTLY TOOK OVER.
PLEASE HAVE BOSS LI VERIFY WHETHER MORENA IS IN TIER 1.
ALL RIGHT.
MORENA'S LOCATION WILL DRASTICALLY CHANGE THINGS.
IF SHE'S NOT UP THERE RIGHT NOW, YOU CAN'T GET THROUGH.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

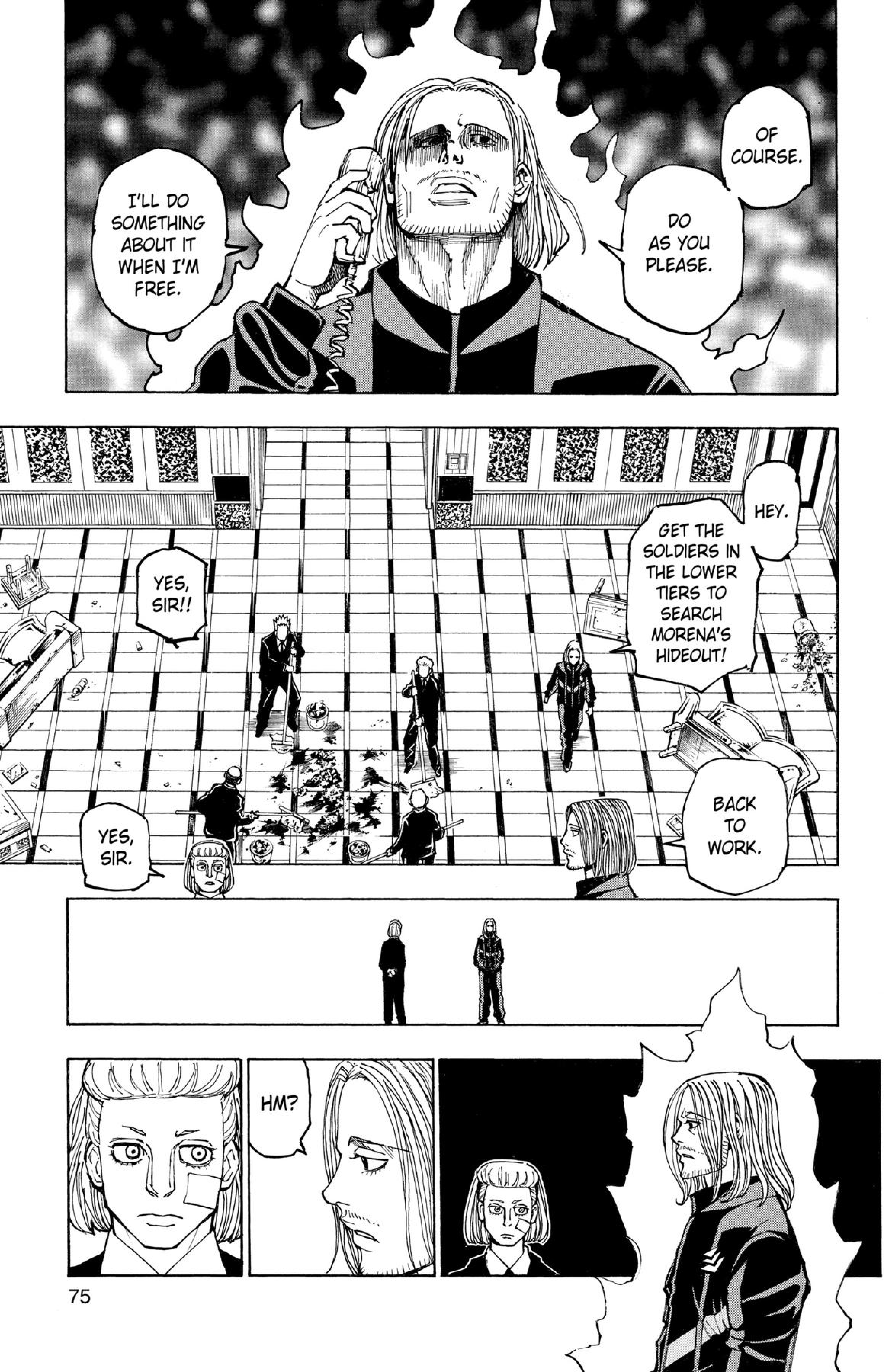

IT'LL BE AN ALL-OUT WAR.
ONE THAT WON'T STOP UNTIL ONE SIDE GETS CRUSHED.
THE KAKIN MAFIA HAS A CODE OF CONDUCT.
A MEMBER WHO WISHES TO MAKE A HIT OR A RAID NEEDS TO TELL THEIR BOSS IN ADVANCE, AND THE BOSSES TOUCH BASE WITH EACH OTHER.
HUH?
I DON'T GET IT.
BOSS!! I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!
MEMBER A
LEMME AT 'EM!
BOSS A
ALL RIGHT, GO. I'LL TALK TO THEM.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
GAH!
MEMBER B
BOSS A
SORRY, MY YOUNG'IN WENT ROGUE.
AH, THE FOLLY OF YOUTH.
BOSS B
I'LL SETTLE IT WITH ——.

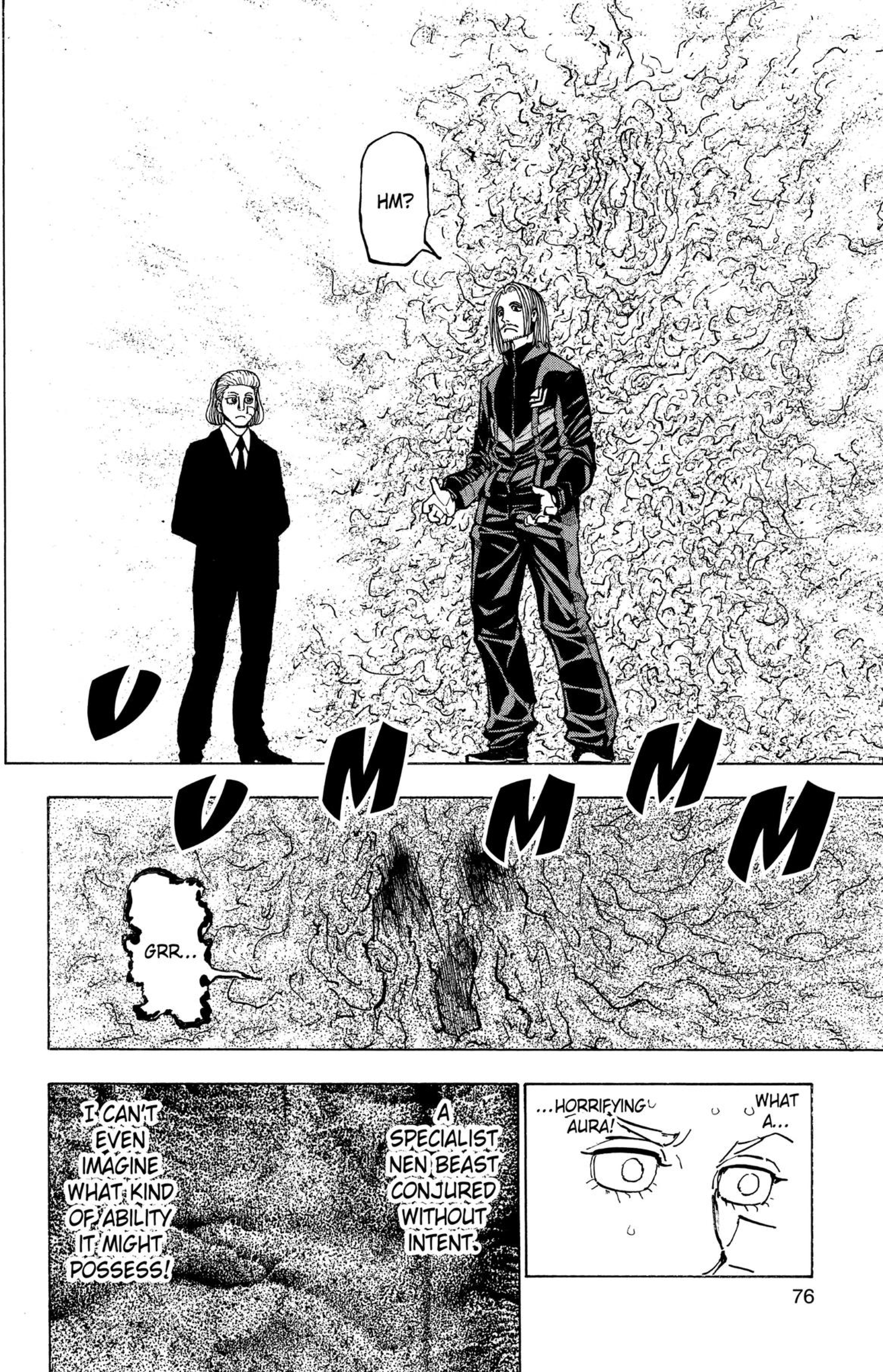

THE DEAL COULD BE MADE WITH MONEY, A LIFE, OR A LIMB.
BUT THE VICTIM'S BOSS MAKES AN OFFER CONSIDERING THE OVERALL ***BALANCE***... THIS SHOWS THE BOSS'S GENEROSITY AND CONTROL.
THE NOTIFICATION IS OFTEN AFTER THE FACT, BUT IT'S AN UNWRITTEN RULE THAT IT SHOULD BE WITHIN 24 HOURS.
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE BOSS WAS AWAY FROM HIS TURF WHEN THE INCITING INCIDENT OCCURRED! THAT'S THE WAY IT MUST BE FOR KAKIN MAFIA.
...
I SEE.
ABOARD THIS SHIP, THE ONLY PLACE AWAY FROM THEIR TURF...
...ARE TIERS 1 AND 2...
THAT'S RIGHT.
IT'S BEEN MORE THAN TWO DAYS SINCE THE FIRST MURDER, BUT IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL ***YET***.
THERE MAY HAVE BEEN NO CONTACT BECAUSE THE BOSS WAS AWAY.
BUT...
IF THE BOSS WAS IN TIER 3 AND THERE'S NO CALL, THE WAR IS ON.
IT'S THE EQUIVALENT OF PERSONALLY SHOOTING ANOTHER BOSS.
THERE'S NO STOPPING IT ANYMORE.
SO IF YOU KILL THE HIT MAN, THE TROUPE WILL BE AT WAR WITH HEIL-LY.
IT'LL CONTINUE UNTIL ONE SIDE IS CRUSHED.
WELL, THAT'S FINE WITH US...
THERE WILL BE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS.

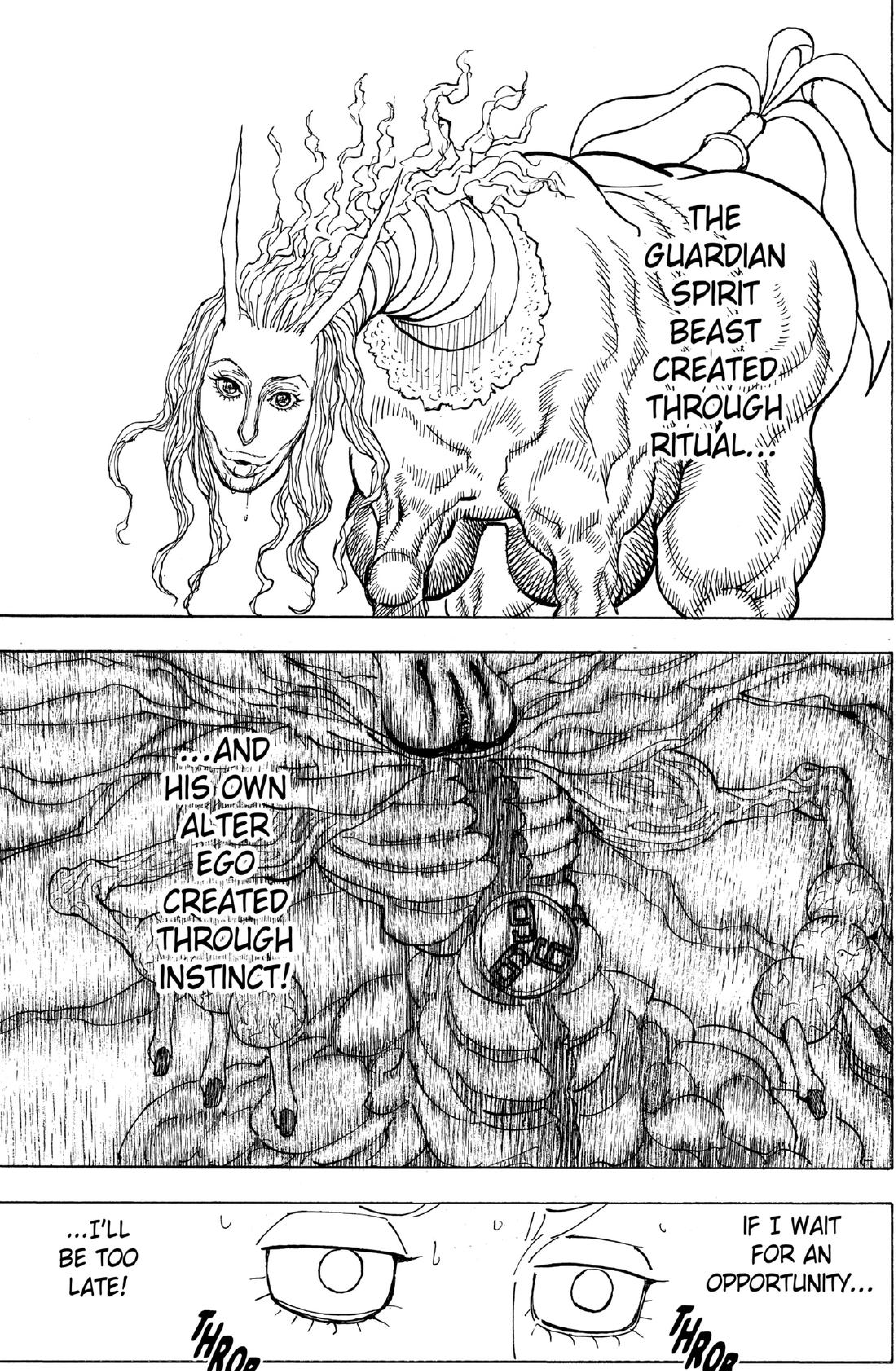

THE LOWEST-ECHELON PUNKS HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.
THEY WON'T COOPERATE WITH ANY FAMILY IN A WAR.
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GET INTELLIGENCE FROM THEM LIKE YOU DID HERE.
WE CAN TALK TO XI-YU, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND THIS HISOKA YOURSELF.
SO...
IF THE HEIL-LY BOSS IS DOWN HERE...
...IT'LL BE QUICKEST FOR US TO *KILL HER*.
!
IF THE NEW BOSS IS A TROUBLE-MAKER, GET ANOTHER ONE.
IF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BENEFACTOR AND THE BOSS WAS BAD, THEY MAY EVEN THANK US.
CAN YOU VERIFY WHERE MORENA IS AT ONCE?
IN THE MEANTIME, WE'LL GET AHOLD OF THE OTHERS AND HUNT DOWN THE HIT MAN.
DANGER-OUS, RIGHT?
YOU'RE RIGHT...

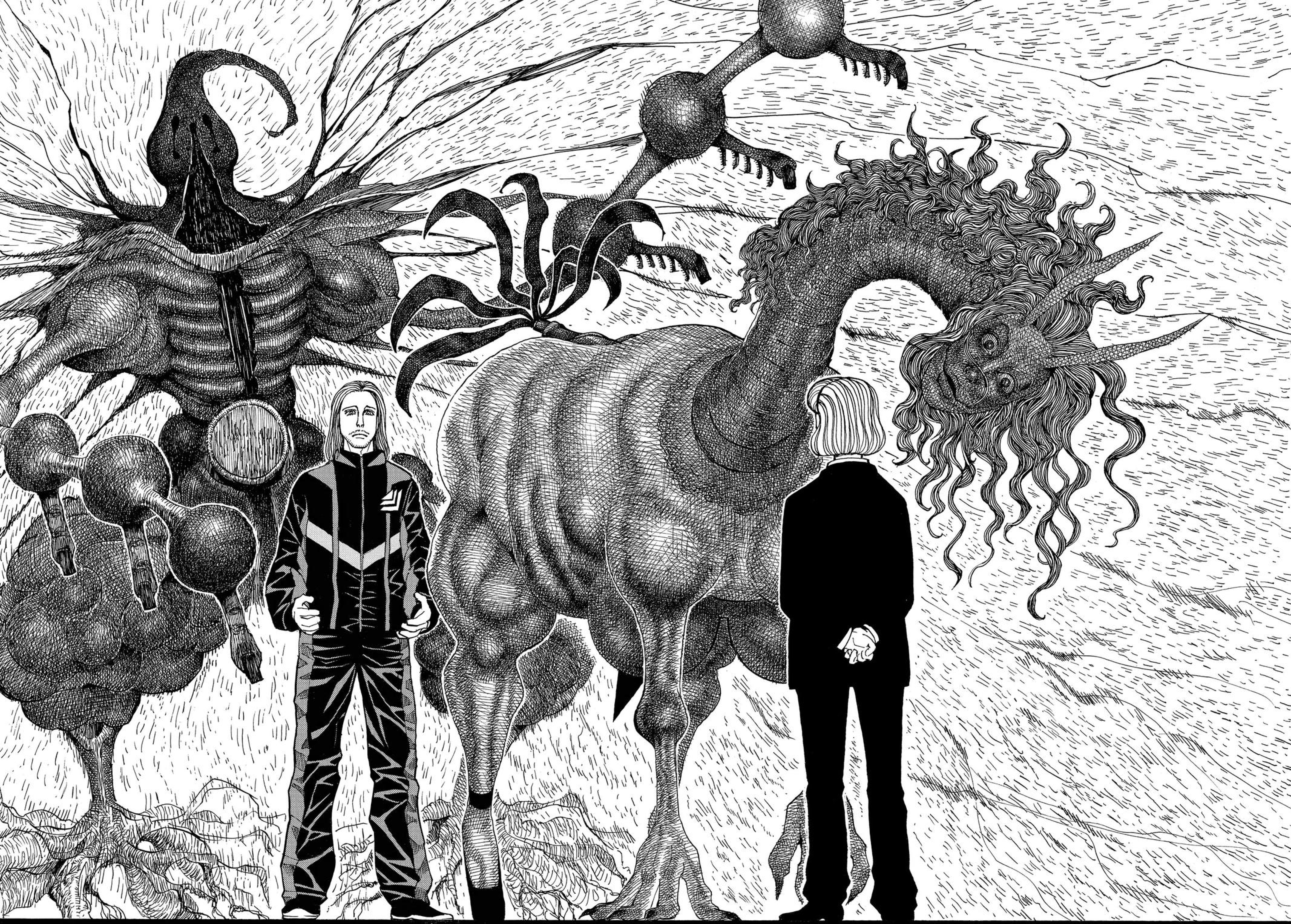


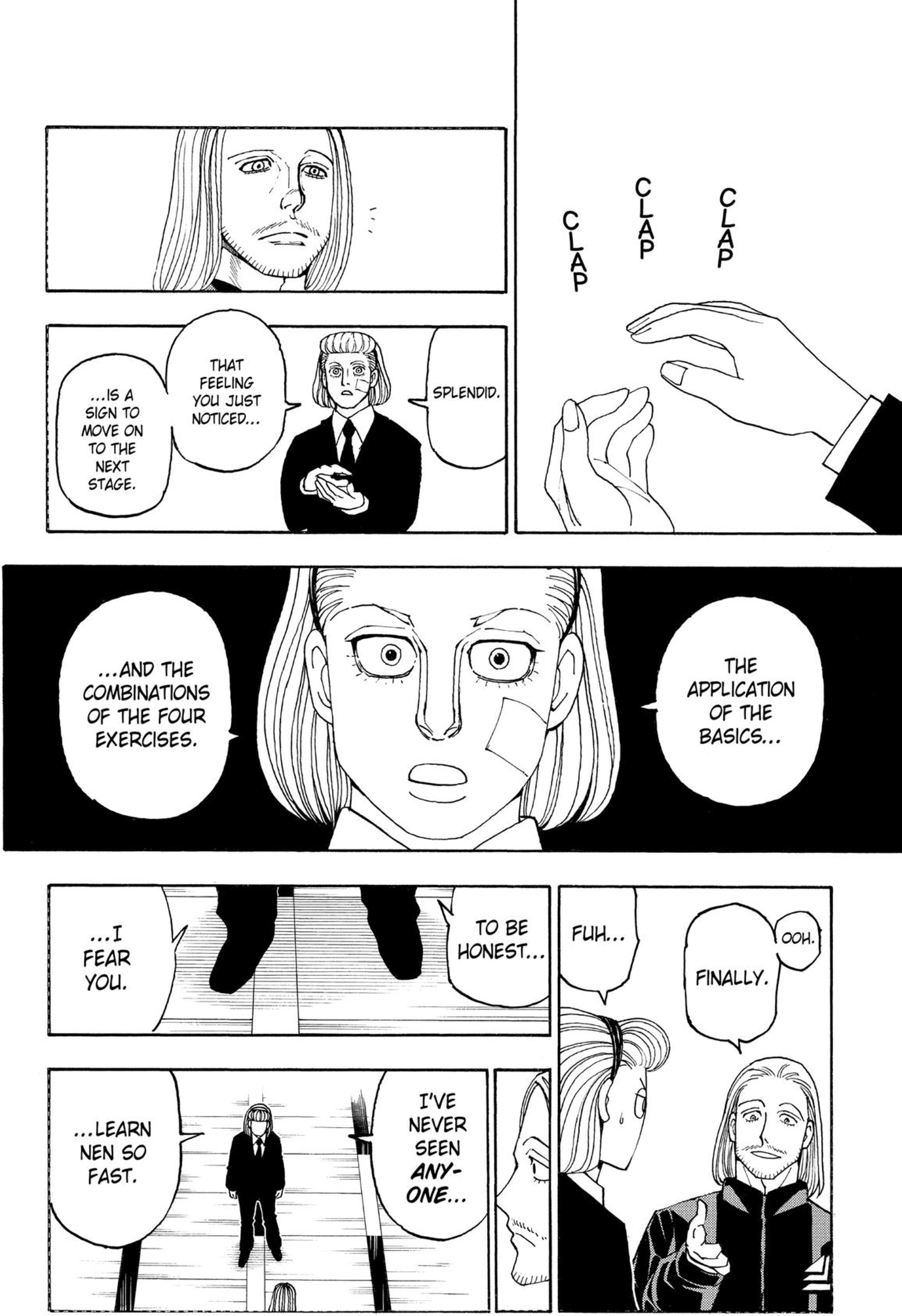

THE "SECOND-TRACK FAKERS" WHO MUST STAY OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT WERE COMPENSATED UNDER THE TABLE.
THEIR RESIDENCES ON BOARD WERE IN EQUIVALENT LOCATIONS TO THOSE OF THE HIGHER QUEENS, WITH THEIR LUGGAGE ALLOWANCES SECOND ONLY TO THE KING'S.
ON ONE CONDITION …
ABSOLUTE OBEDIENCE TO THE MONARCHY SYSTEM.
YEAH …
1004
SHE'S NOT IN THE VVIP AREA.
SHE'S PROBABLY BEEN DOWN BELOW SINCE BOARDING.
CAMOUFLAGED BY BUYING OUT A BUTLER.
YEAH, I'D BEEN BUSY. IT WASN'T ON MY MIND.

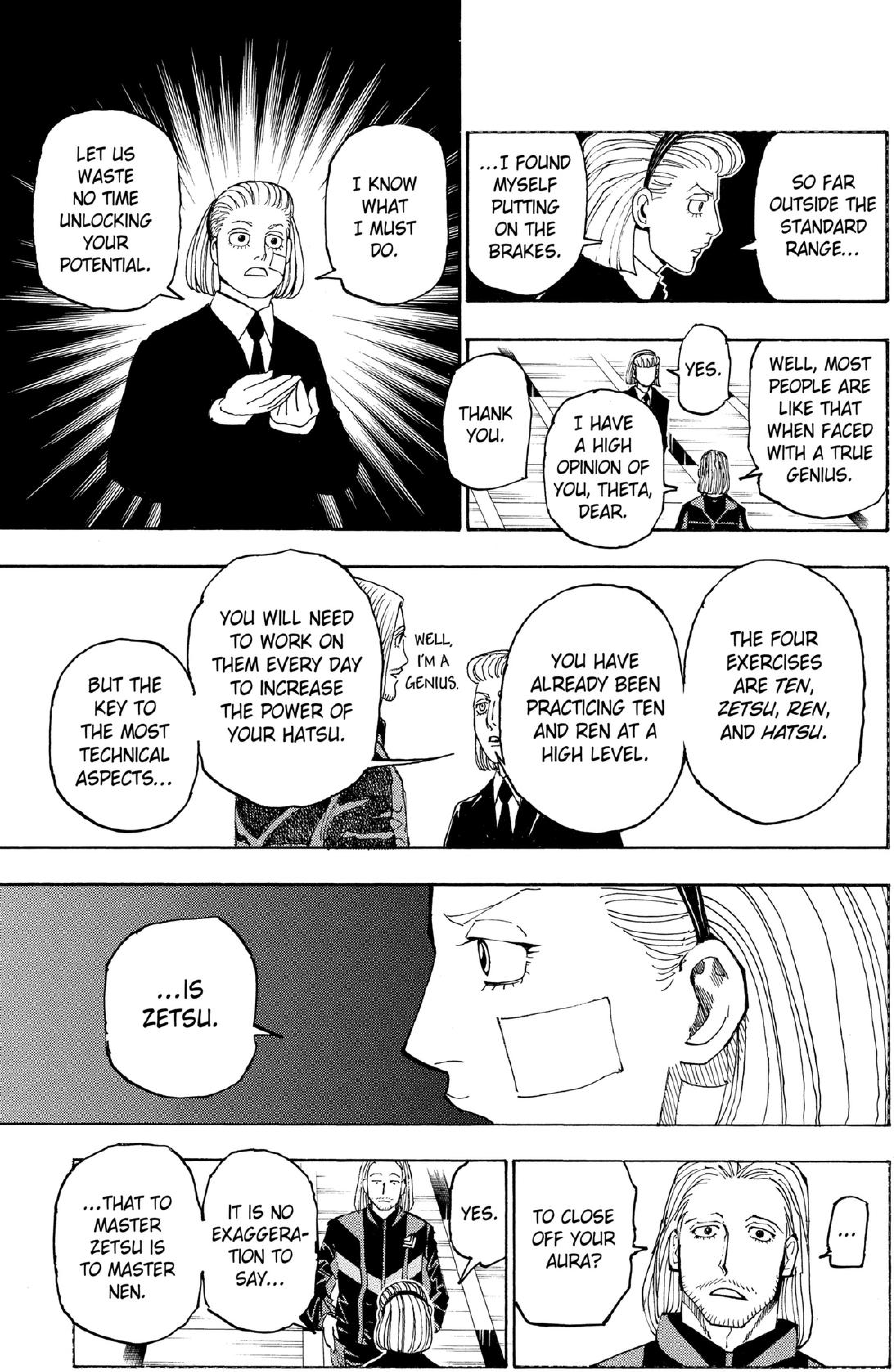

OF COURSE.
DO AS YOU PLEASE.
I'LL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT WHEN I'M FREE.
HEY.
GET THE SOLDIERS IN THE LOWER TIERS TO SEARCH MORENA'S HIDEOUT!
YES, SIR!!
BACK TO WORK.
YES, SIR.
HM?

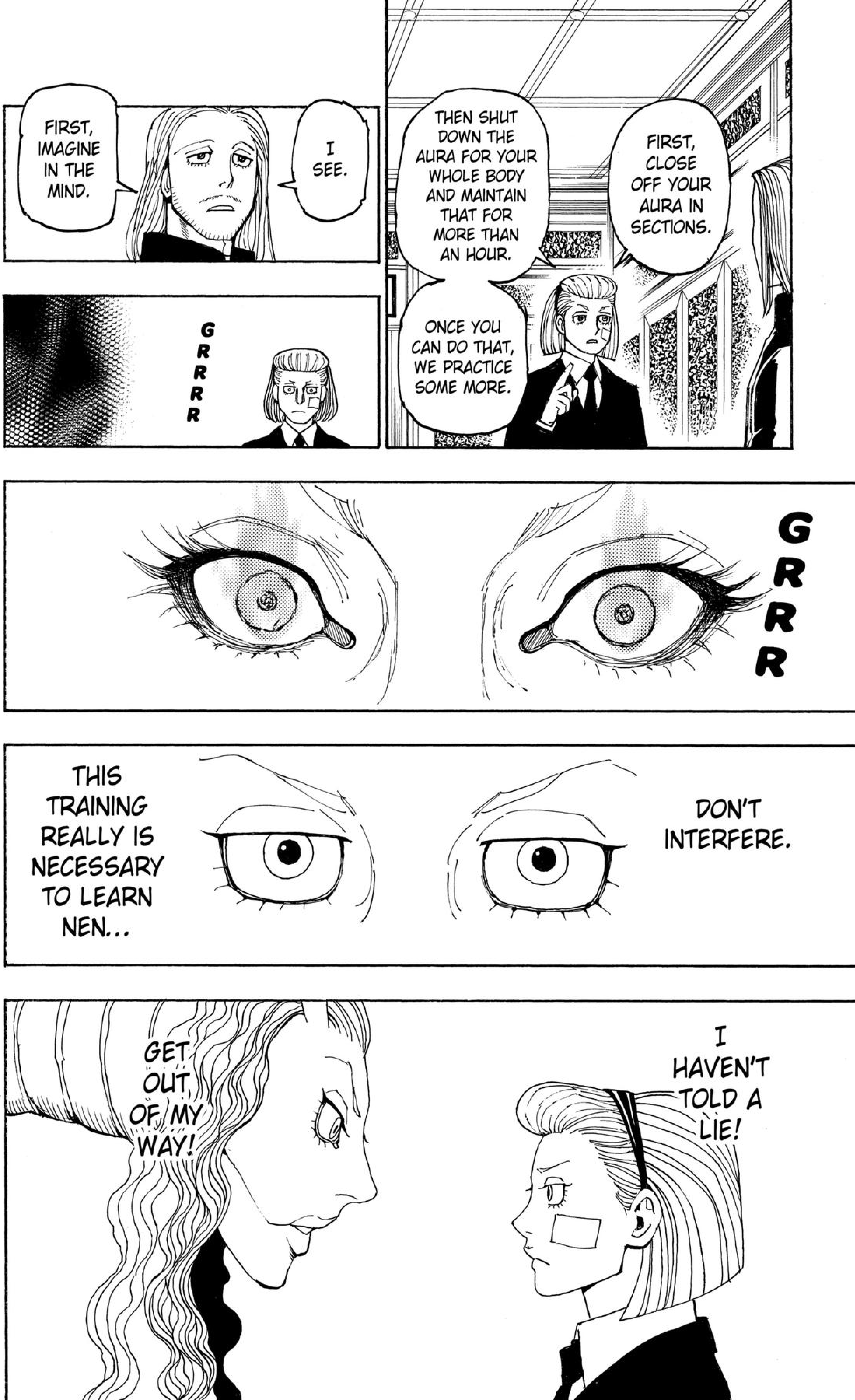

HM?
VUMMMM
GRR...
WHAT A...
...HORRIFYING AURA!
A SPECIALIST NEN BEAST CONJURED WITHOUT INTENT.
I CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE WHAT KIND OF ABILITY IT MIGHT POSSESS!

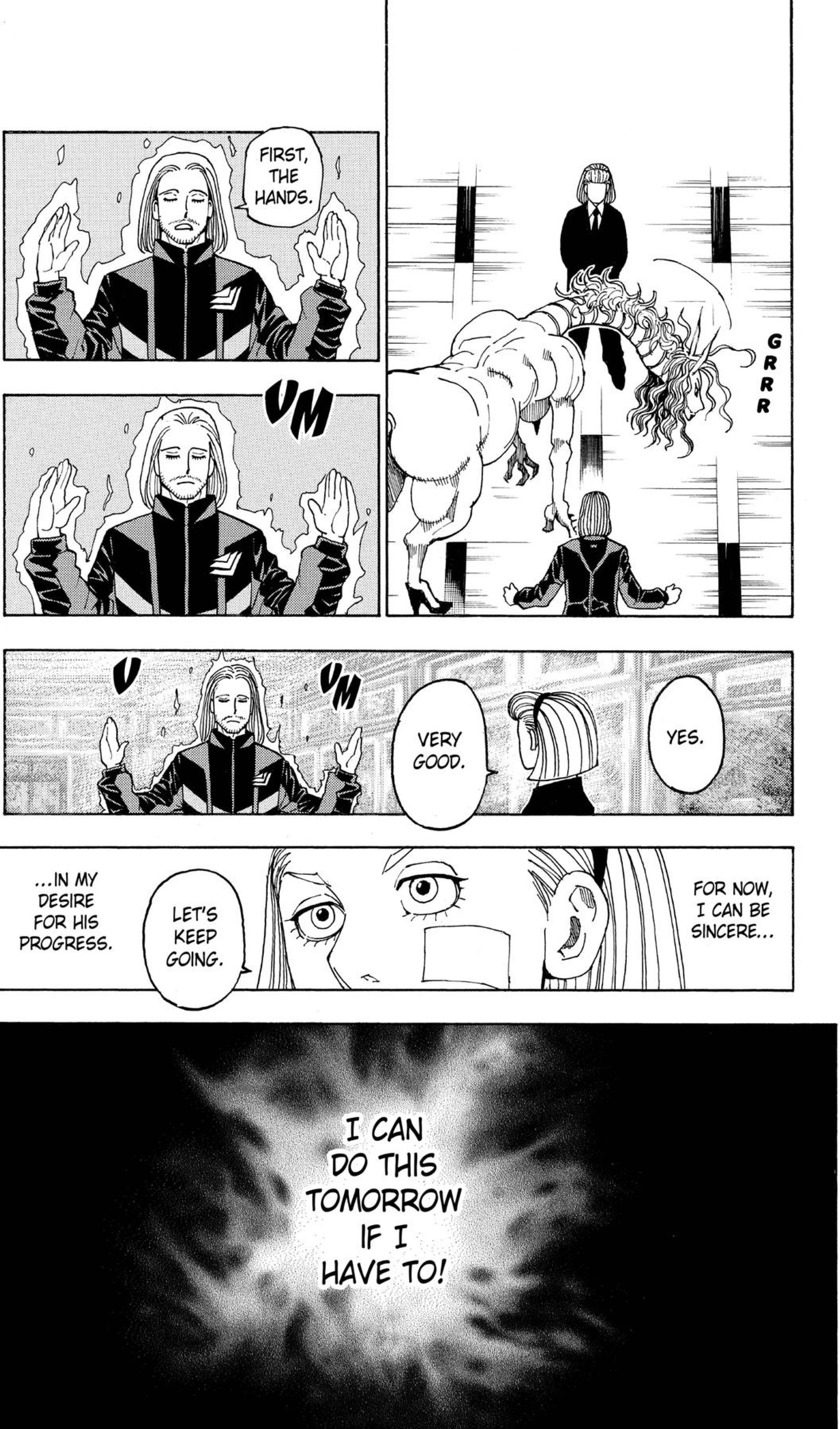

THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST CREATED THROUGH RITUAL...
...AND HIS OWN ALTER EGO CREATED THROUGH INSTINCT!
IF I WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY...
...I'LL BE TOO LATE!
THROB
THROB

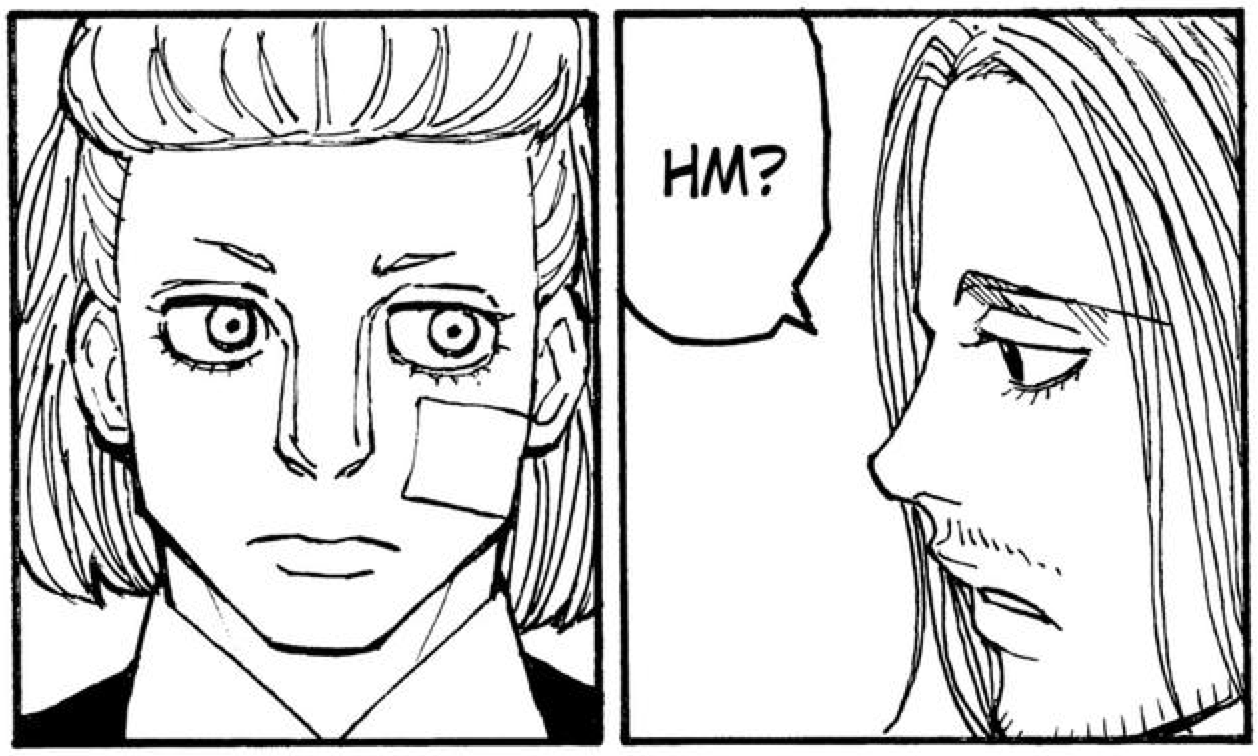



CLAP CLAP CLAP
SPLENDID.
THAT FEELING YOU JUST NOTICED...
...IS A SIGN TO MOVE ON TO THE NEXT STAGE.
THE APPLICATION OF THE BASICS...
...AND THE COMBINATIONS OF THE FOUR EXERCISES.
OOH.
FINALLY.
FUH...
TO BE HONEST...
...I FEAR YOU.
I'VE NEVER SEEN *ANYONE*...
...LEARN NEN SO FAST.

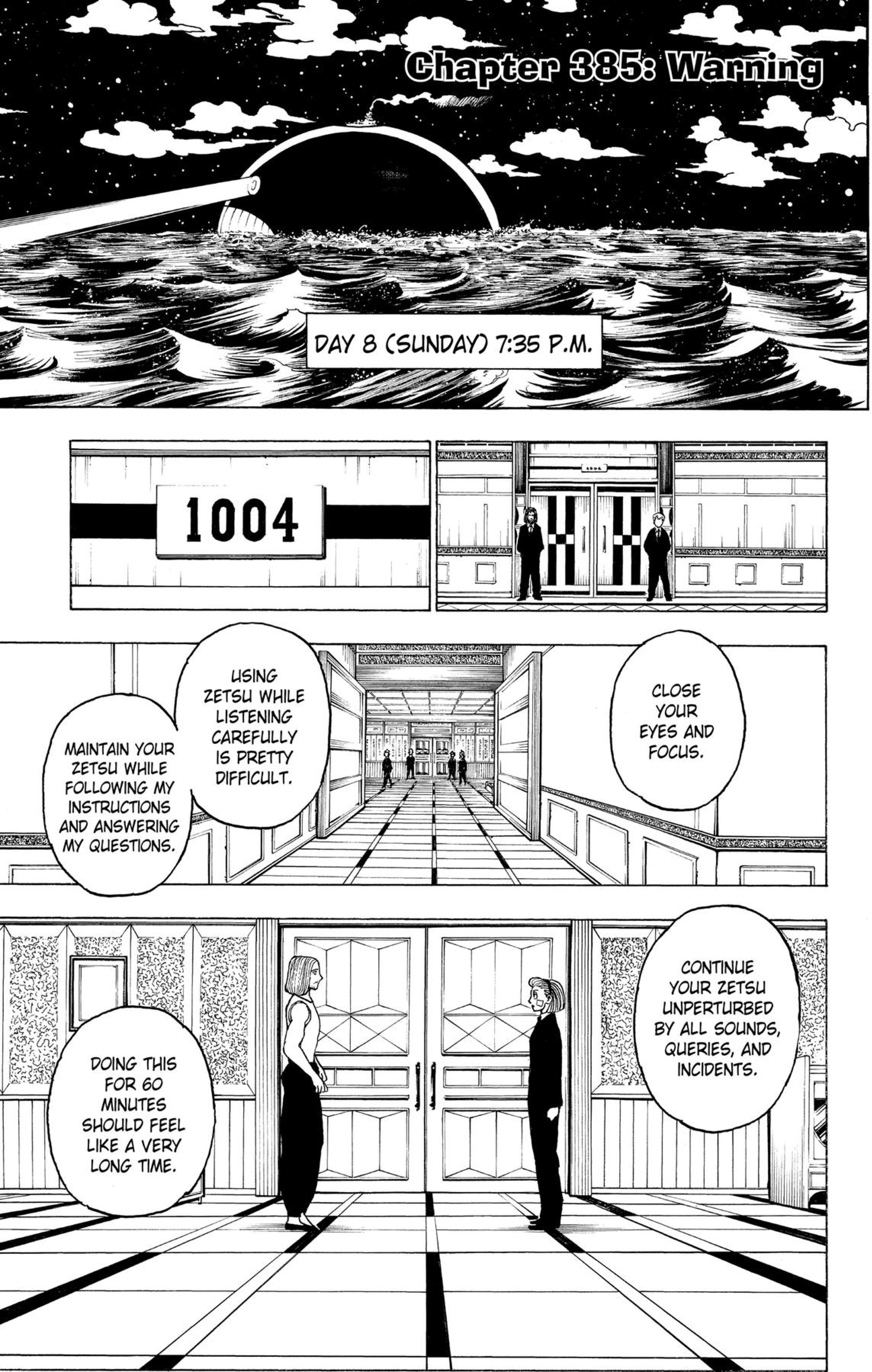

SO FAR OUTSIDE THE STANDARD RANGE...
...I FOUND MYSELF PUTTING ON THE BRAKES.
WELL, MOST PEOPLE ARE LIKE THAT WHEN FACED WITH A TRUE GENIUS.
YES.
I HAVE A HIGH OPINION OF YOU, THETA, DEAR.
THANK YOU.
I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO.
LET US WASTE NO TIME UNLOCKING YOUR POTENTIAL.
THE FOUR EXERCISES ARE *TEN*, *ZETSU*, *REN*, AND *HATSU*.
YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN PRACTICING TEN AND REN AT A HIGH LEVEL.
WELL, I'M A GENIUS.
YOU WILL NEED TO WORK ON THEM EVERY DAY TO INCREASE THE POWER OF YOUR HATSU.
BUT THE KEY TO THE MOST TECHNICAL ASPECTS...
...IS ZETSU.
...
TO CLOSE OFF YOUR AURA?
YES.
IT IS NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY...
...THAT TO MASTER ZETSU IS TO MASTER NEN.

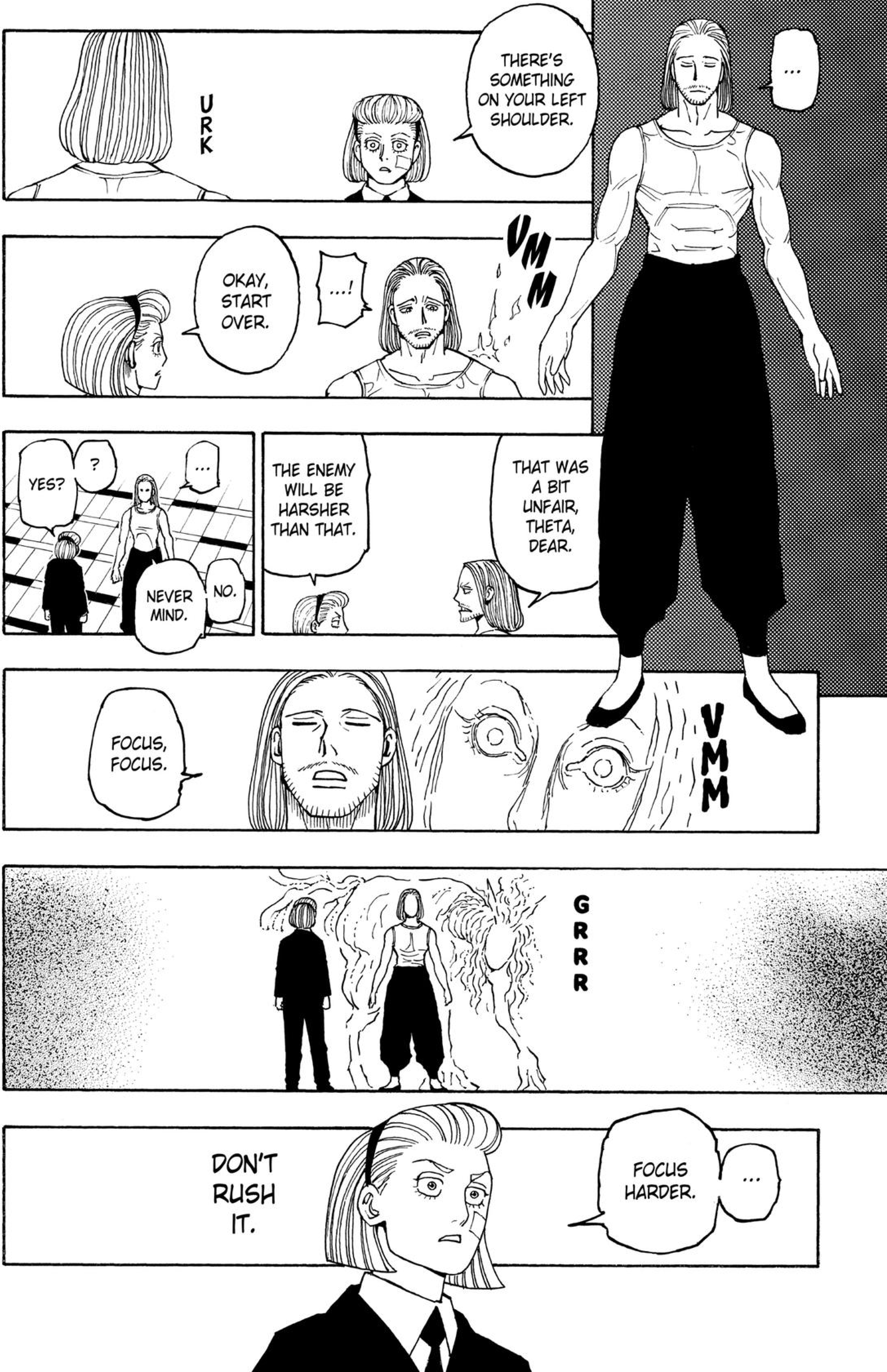

FIRST, CLOSE OFF YOUR AURA IN SECTIONS.
THEN SHUT DOWN THE AURA FOR YOUR WHOLE BODY AND MAINTAIN THAT FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR.
ONCE YOU CAN DO THAT, WE PRACTICE SOME MORE.
I SEE.
FIRST, IMAGINE IN THE MIND.
GRRRR
GRRRR
DON'T INTERFERE.
THIS TRAINING REALLY IS NECESSARY TO LEARN NEN...
I HAVEN'T TOLD A LIE!
GET OUT OF MY WAY!

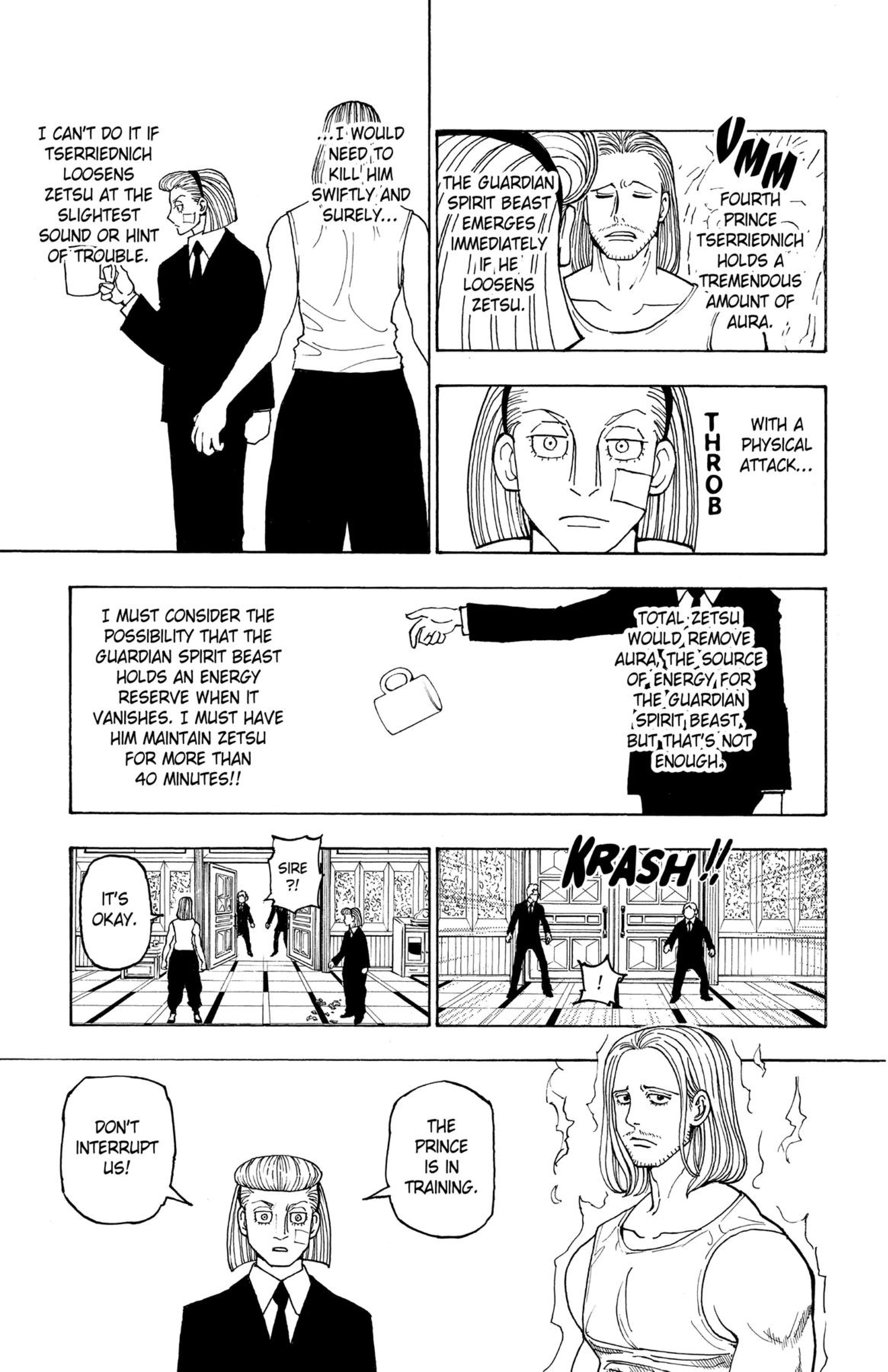

GRRR
FIRST, THE HANDS.
VM
YES.
VERY GOOD.
VUM
V
FOR NOW, I CAN BE SINCERE...
LET'S KEEP GOING.
...IN MY DESIRE FOR HIS PROGRESS.
I CAN DO THIS TOMORROW IF I HAVE TO!

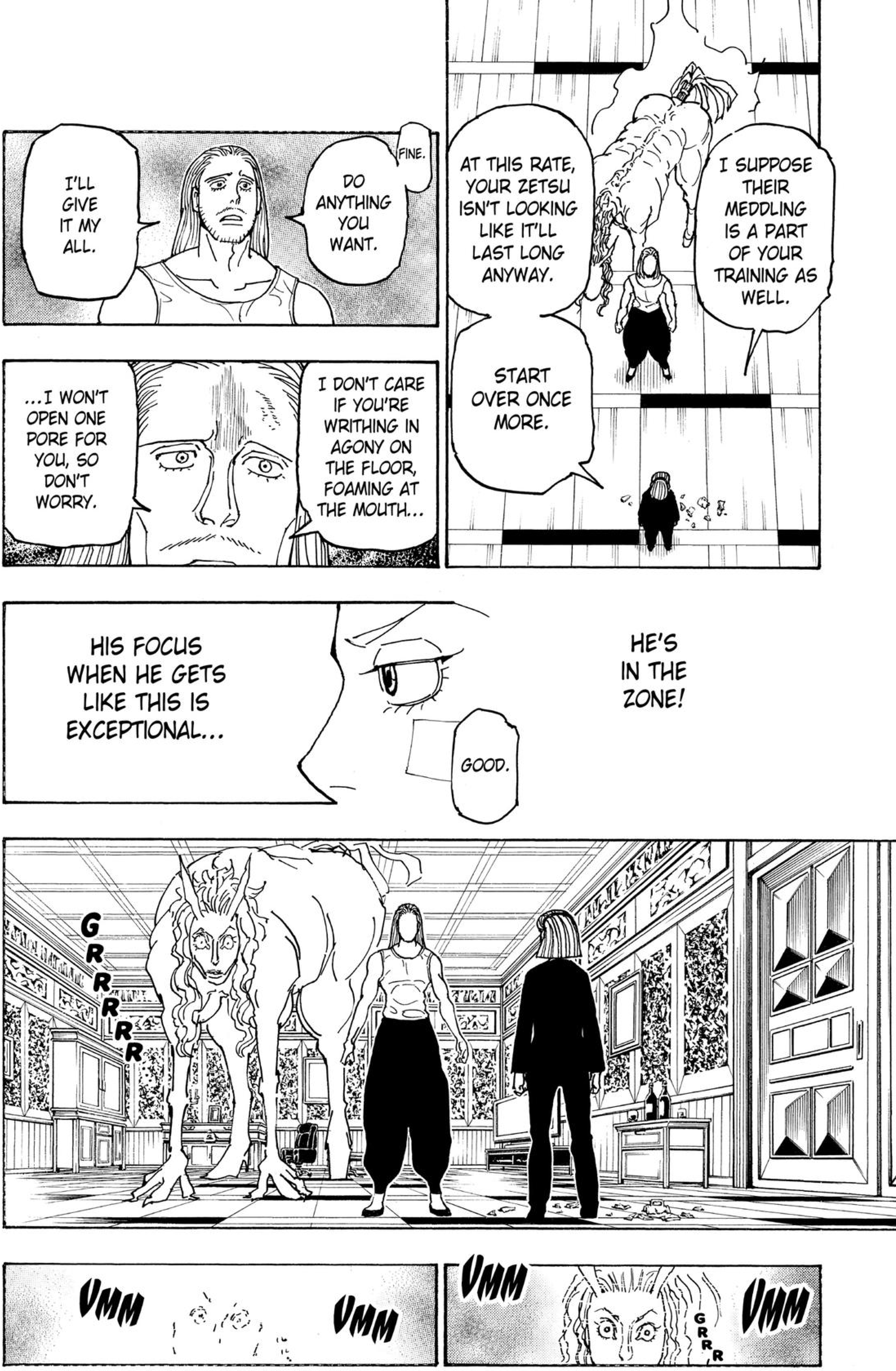

HM?

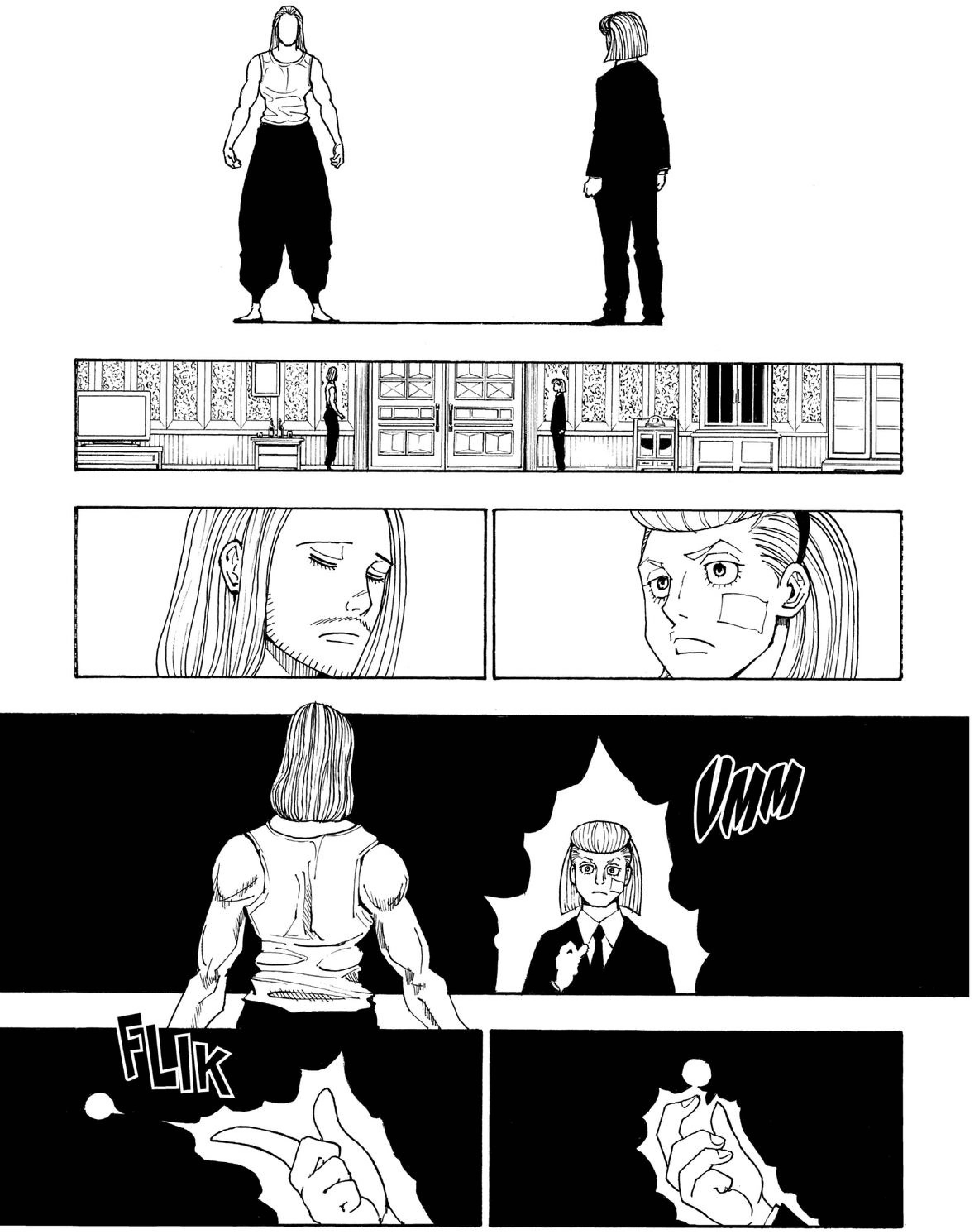
Chapter 385: Warning

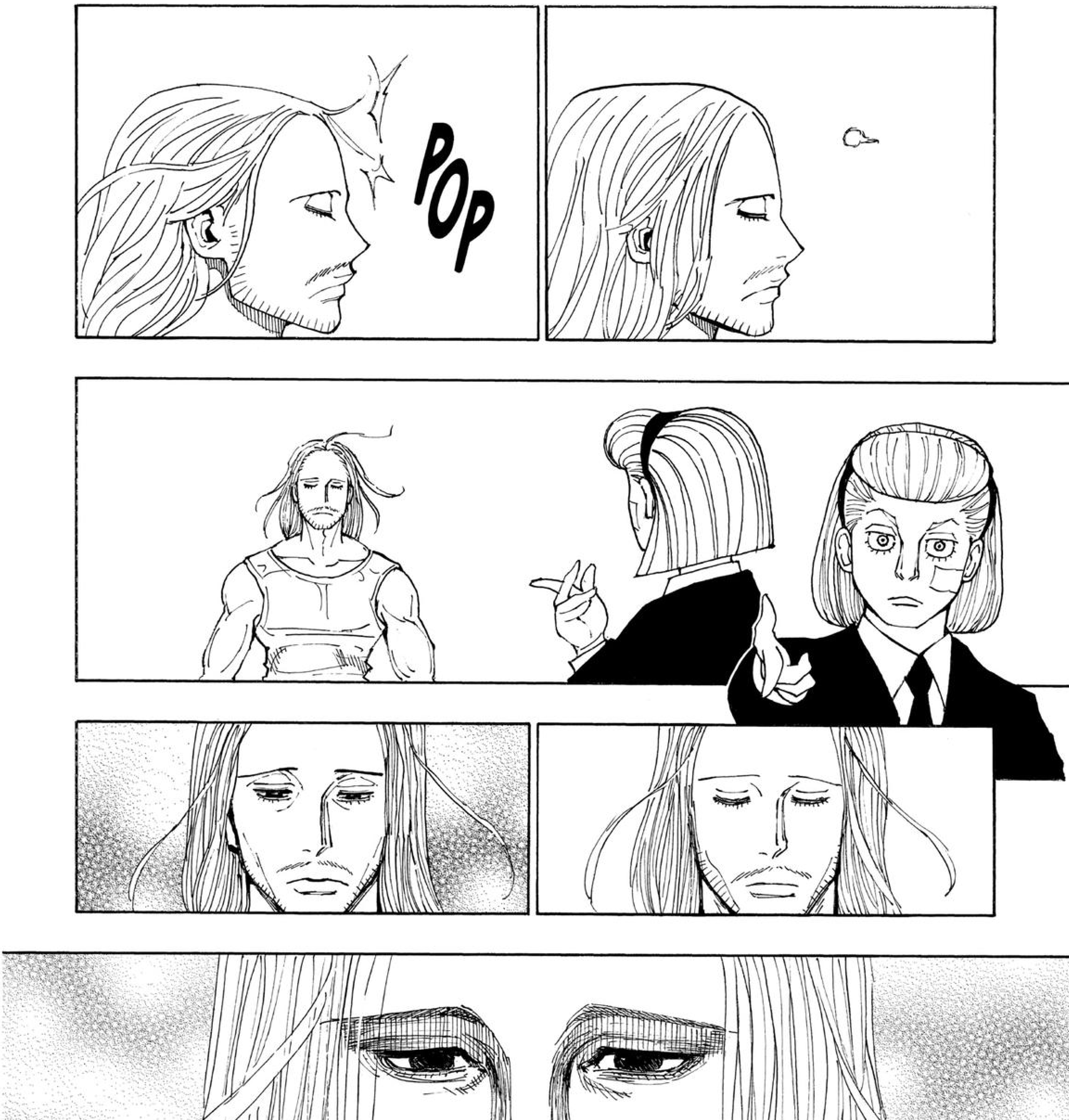

DAY 8 (SUNDAY) 7:35 P.M.
1004
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND FOCUS.
USING ZETSU WHILE LISTENING CAREFULLY IS PRETTY DIFFICULT.
MAINTAIN YOUR ZETSU WHILE FOLLOWING MY INSTRUCTIONS AND ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS.
CONTINUE YOUR ZETSU UNPERTURBED BY ALL SOUNDS, QUERIES, AND INCIDENTS.
DOING THIS FOR 60 MINUTES SHOULD FEEL LIKE A VERY LONG TIME.

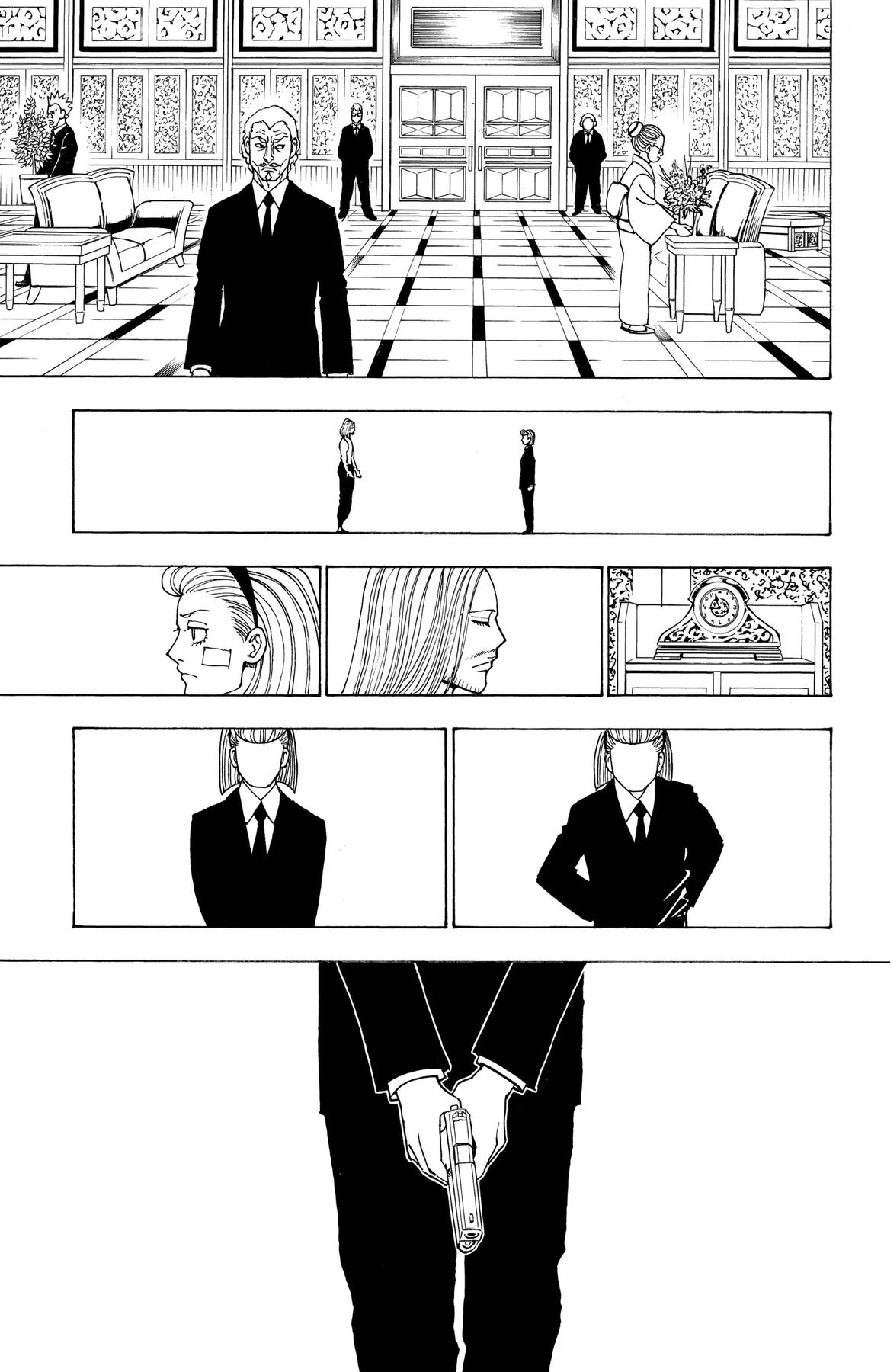

...
THERE'S SOMETHING ON YOUR LEFT SHOULDER.
URK
VMM
...!
OKAY, START OVER.
THAT WAS A BIT UNFAIR, THETA, DEAR.
THE ENEMY WILL BE HARSHER THAN THAT.
...
?
YES?
NO.
NEVER MIND.
VMM
FOCUS, FOCUS.
GRRR
...
FOCUS HARDER.
DON'T RUSH IT.

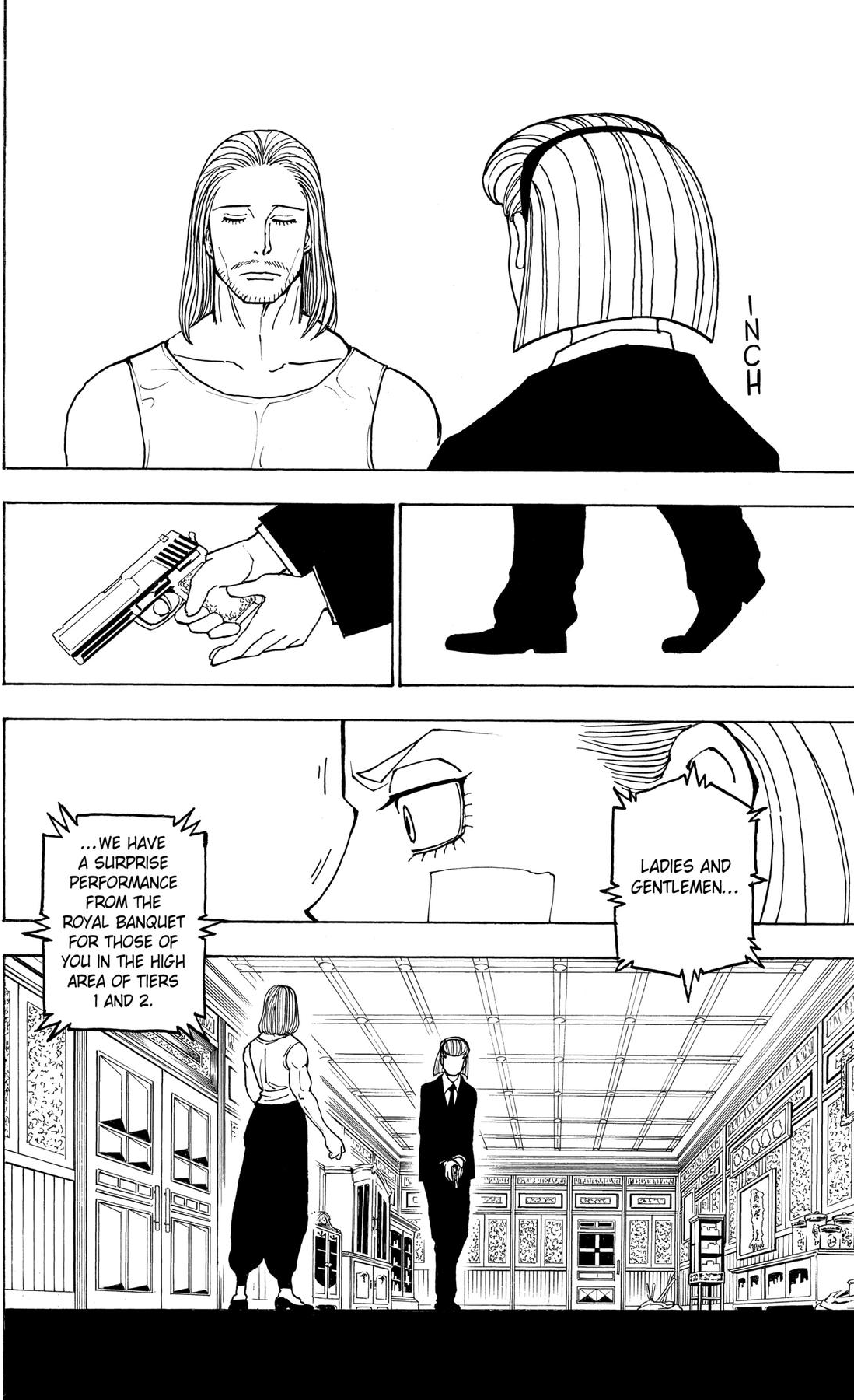

VMM
FOURTH PRINCE TSERRIEDNICH HOLDS A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF AURA.
THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST EMERGES IMMEDIATELY IF HE LOOSENS ZETSU.
WITH A PHYSICAL ATTACK...
THROB
...I WOULD NEED TO KILL HIM SWIFTLY AND SURELY...
I CAN'T DO IT IF TSERRIEDNICH LOOSENS ZETSU AT THE SLIGHTEST SOUND OR HINT OF TROUBLE.
TOTAL ZETSU WOULD REMOVE AURA, THE SOURCE OF ENERGY FOR THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST, BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.
I MUST CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST HOLDS AN ENERGY RESERVE WHEN IT VANISHES. I MUST HAVE HIM MAINTAIN ZETSU FOR MORE THAN 40 MINUTES!!
KRASH!!
!
SIRE ?!
IT'S OKAY.
THE PRINCE IS IN TRAINING.
DON'T INTERRUPT US!

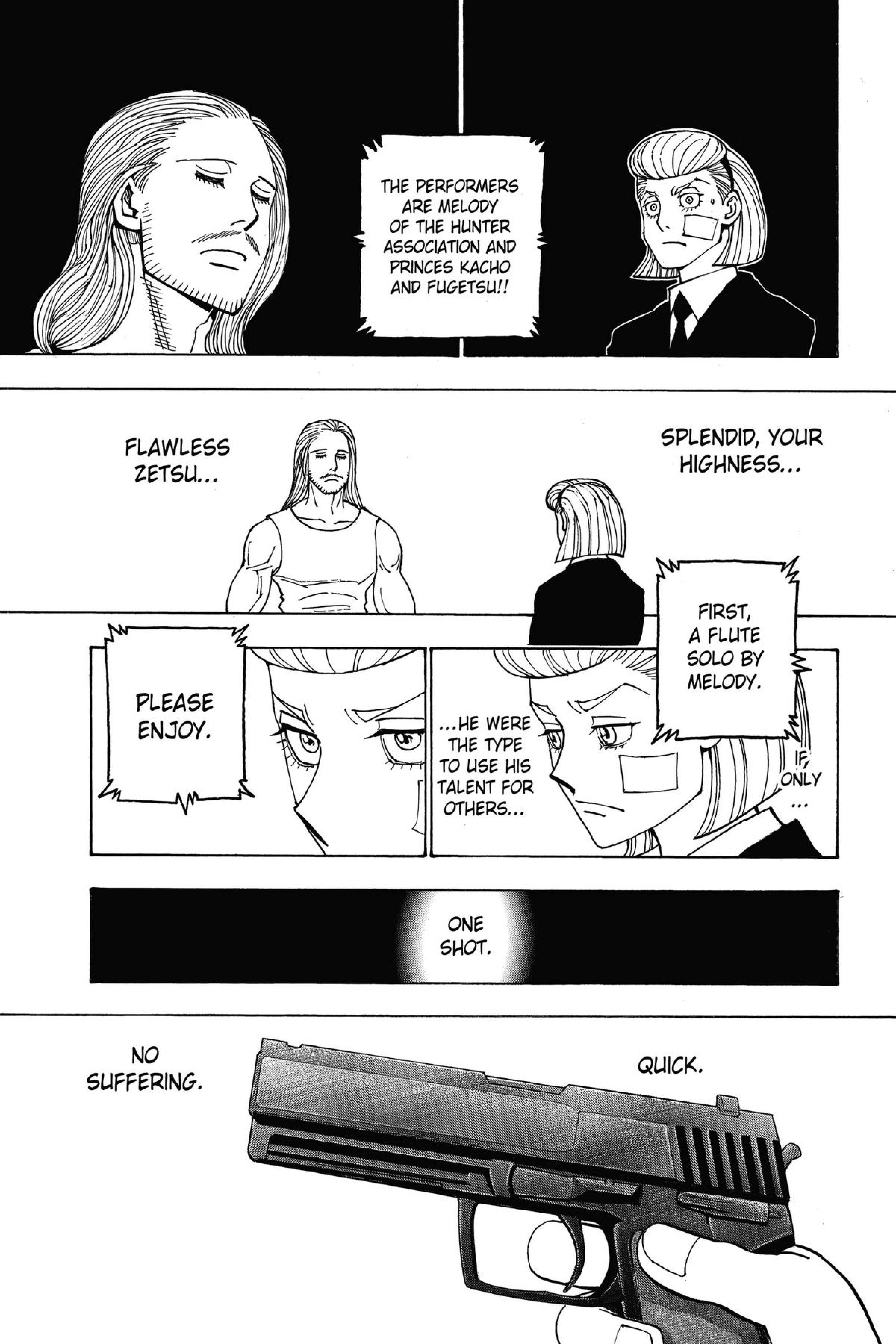

I SUPPOSE THEIR MEDDLING IS A PART OF YOUR TRAINING AS WELL.
AT THIS RATE, YOUR ZETSU ISN'T LOOKING LIKE IT'LL LAST LONG ANYWAY.
START OVER ONCE MORE.
FINE.
DO ANYTHING YOU WANT.
I'LL GIVE IT MY ALL.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE WRITHING IN AGONY ON THE FLOOR, FOAMING AT THE MOUTH...
...I WON'T OPEN ONE PORE FOR YOU, SO DON'T WORRY.
HE'S IN THE ZONE!
GOOD.
HIS FOCUS WHEN HE GETS LIKE THIS IS EXCEPTIONAL...
GRRRRRR
VMM
GRR
VMM
VMM
VMM

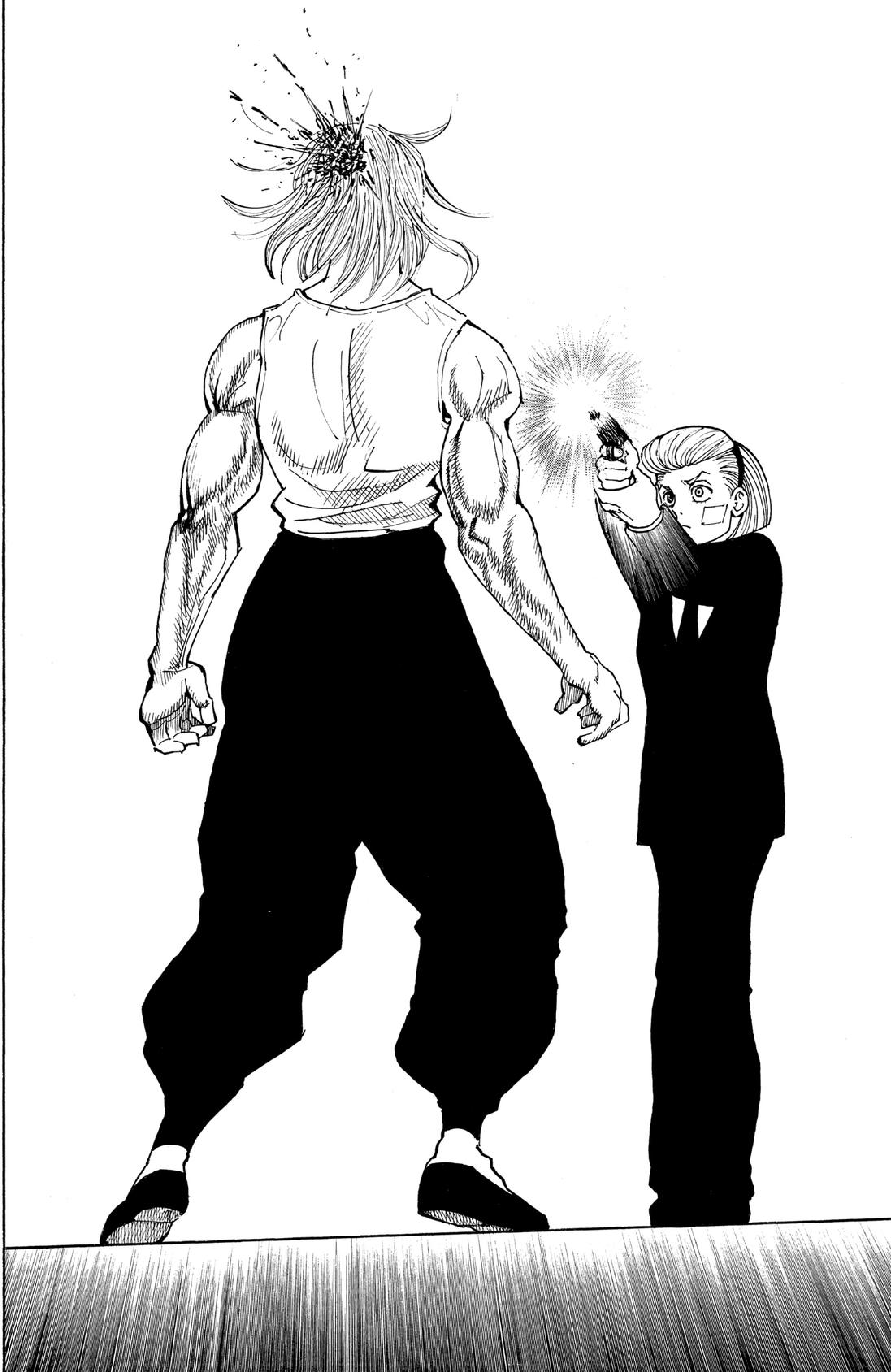

VMM
FLIK

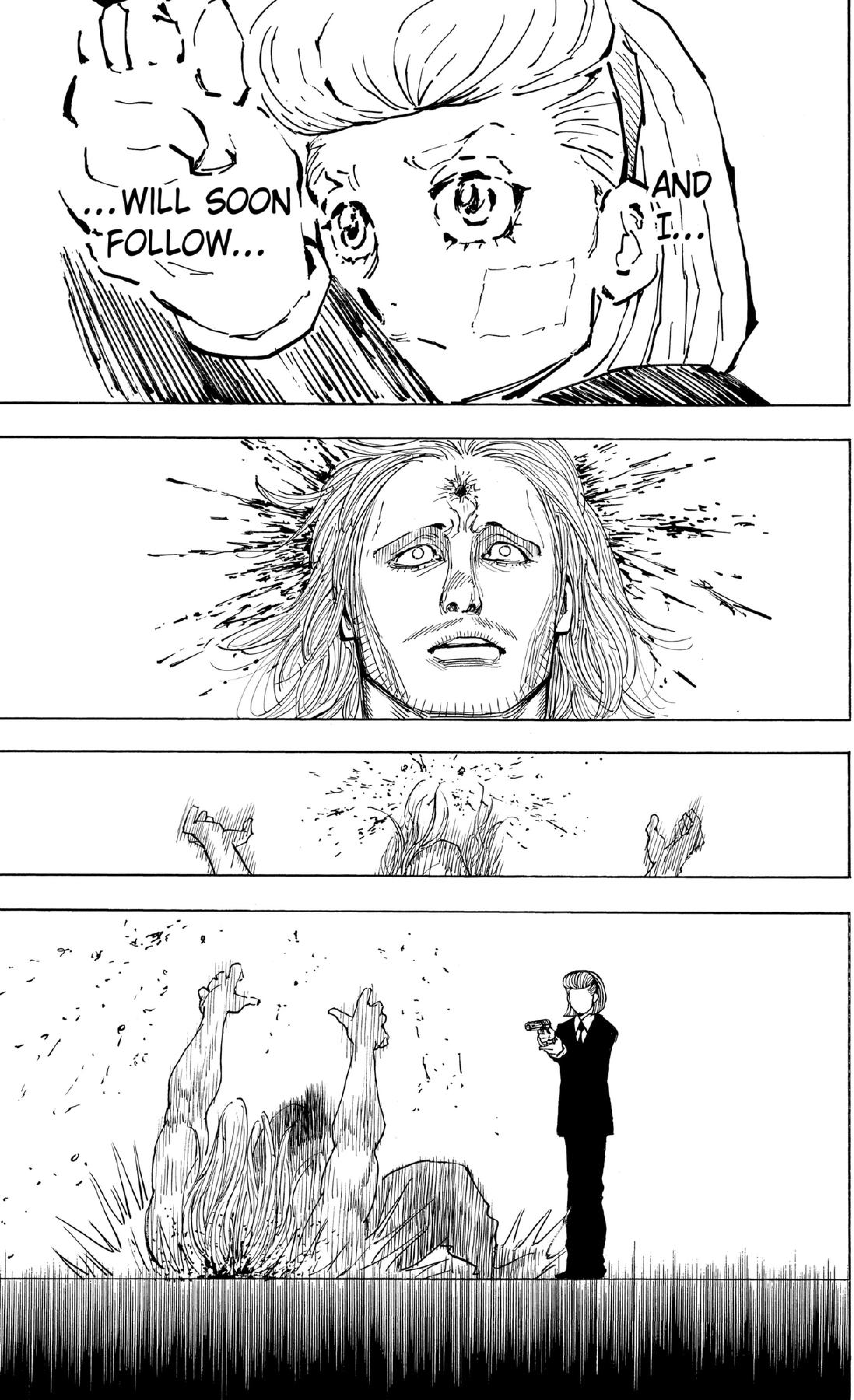

POP

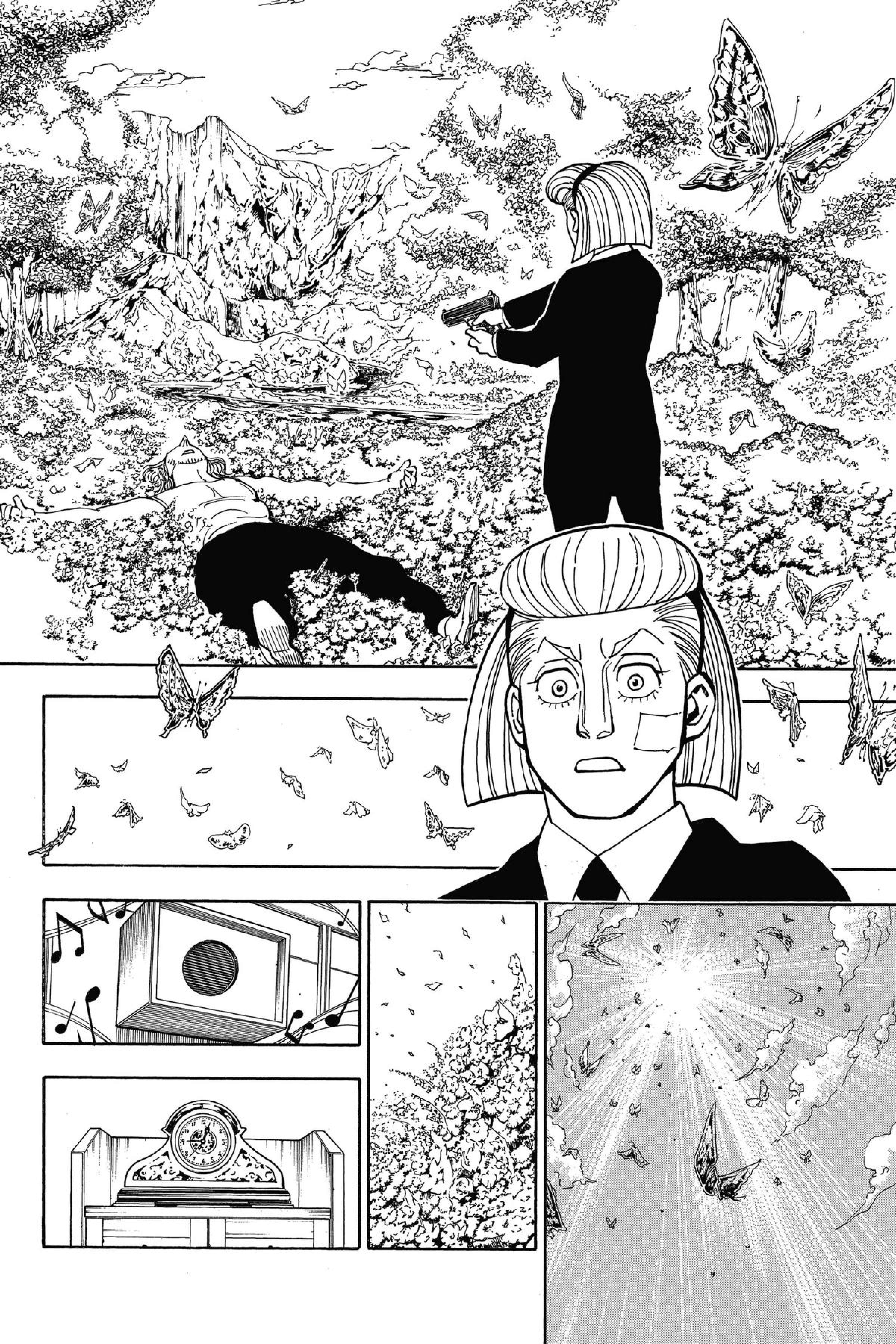


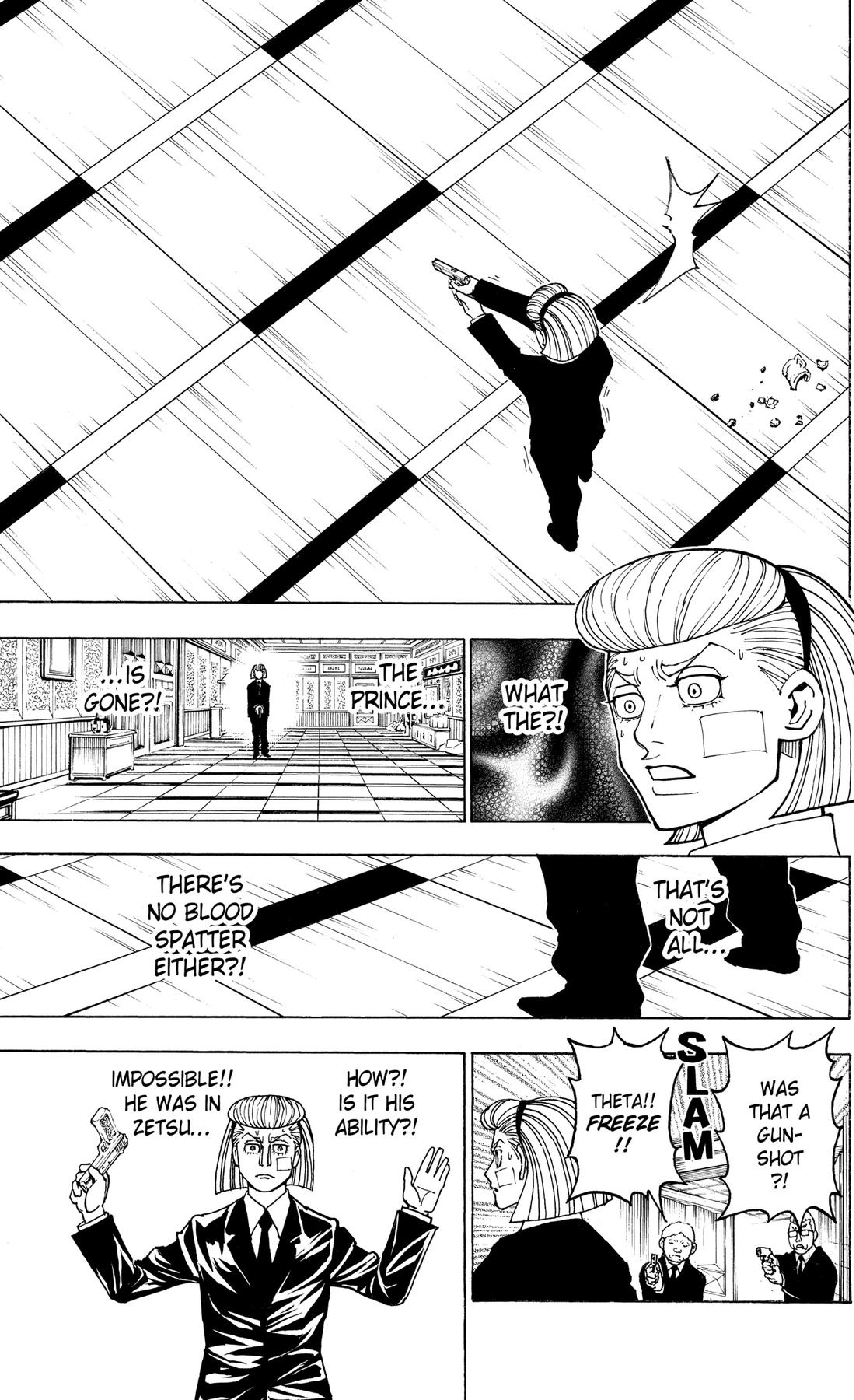

INCH
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
...WE HAVE A SURPRISE PERFORMANCE FROM THE ROYAL BANQUET FOR THOSE OF YOU IN THE HIGH AREA OF TIERS 1 AND 2.

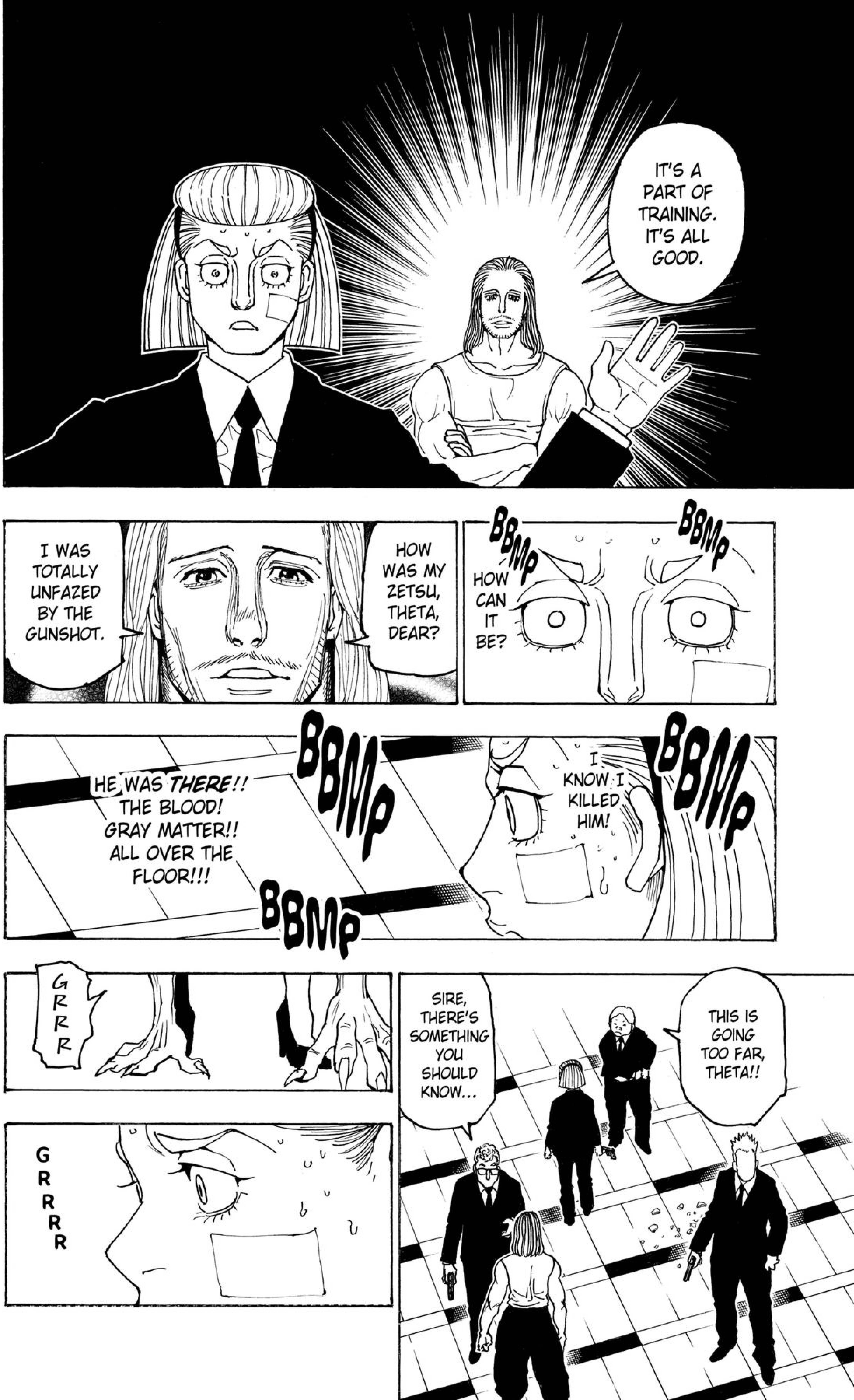

THE PERFORMERS ARE MELODY OF THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION AND PRINCES KACHO AND FUGETSU!!
SPLENDID, YOUR HIGHNESS...
FLAWLESS ZETSU...
FIRST, A FLUTE SOLO BY MELODY.
IF ONLY...
...HE WERE THE TYPE TO USE HIS TALENT FOR OTHERS...
PLEASE ENJOY.
ONE SHOT.
QUICK.
NO SUFFERING.

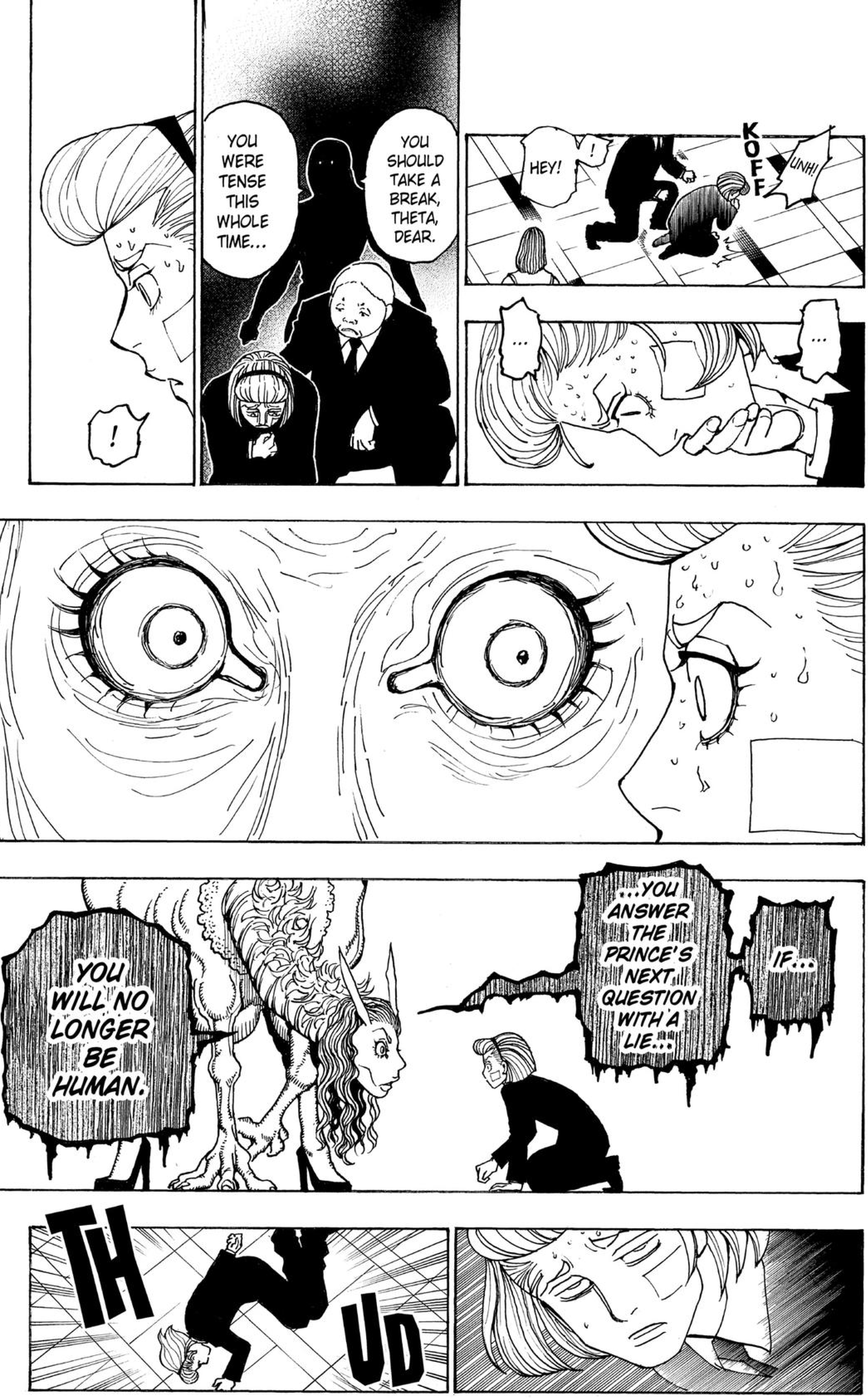


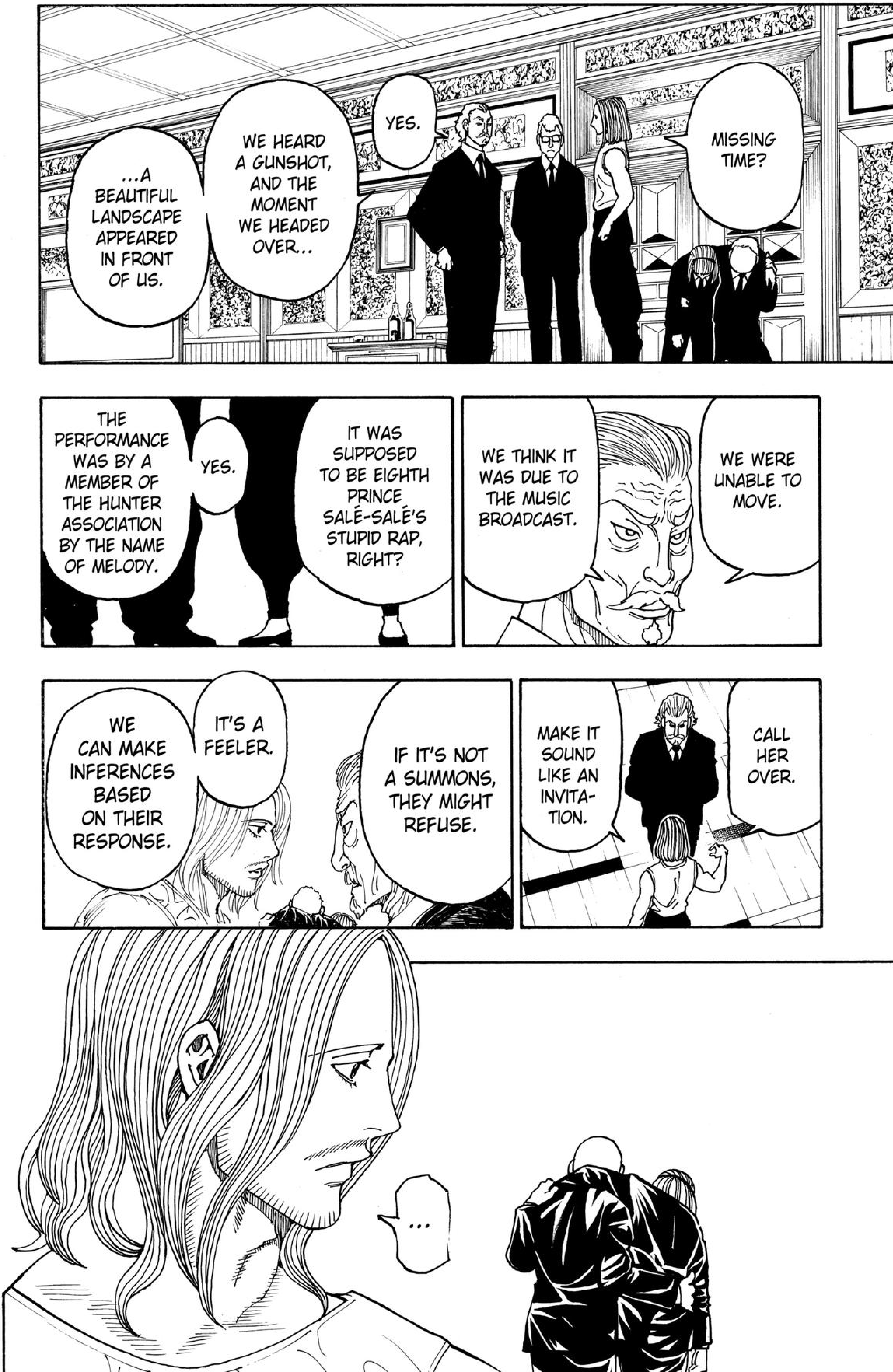

AND I...
...WILL SOON FOLLOW...

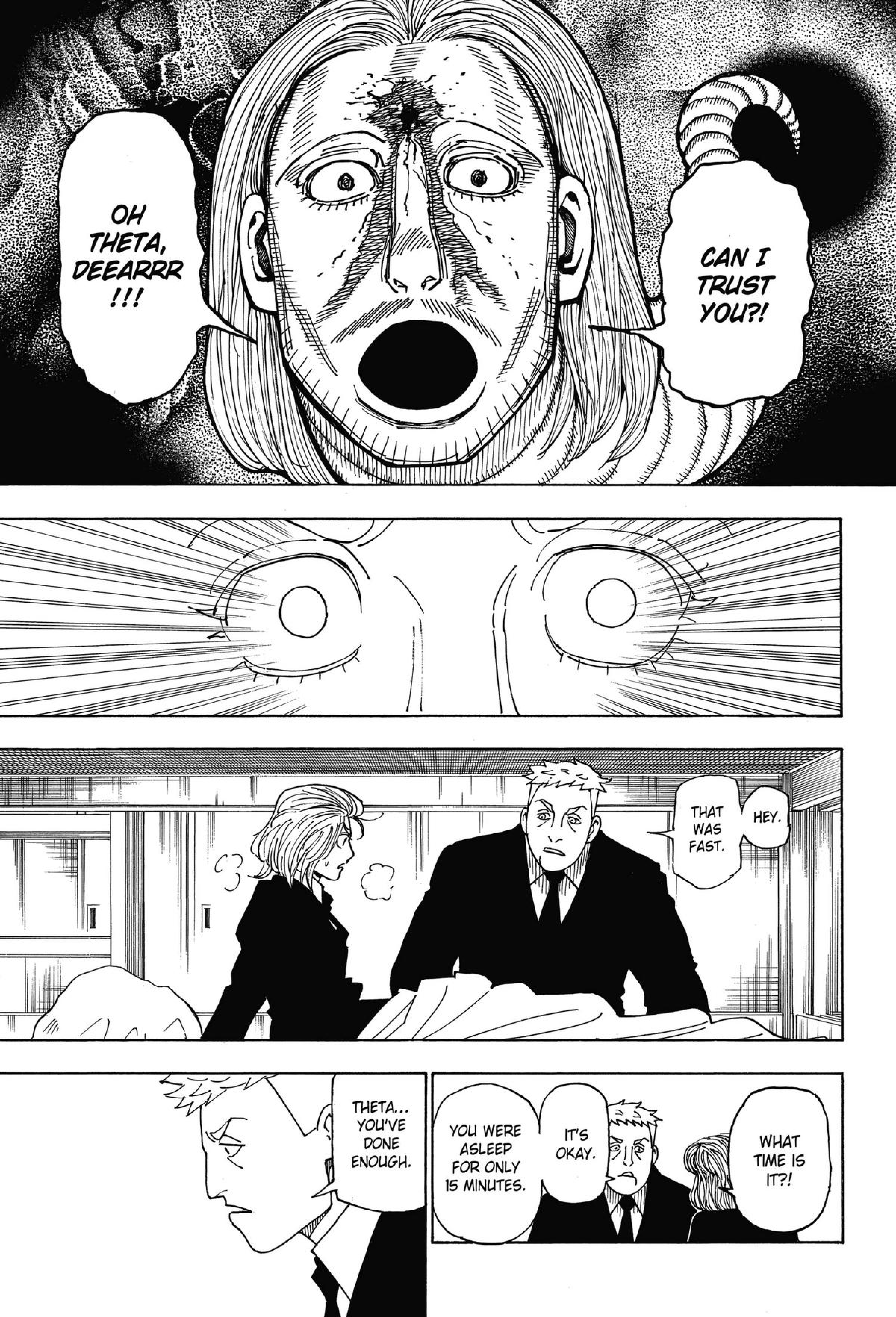


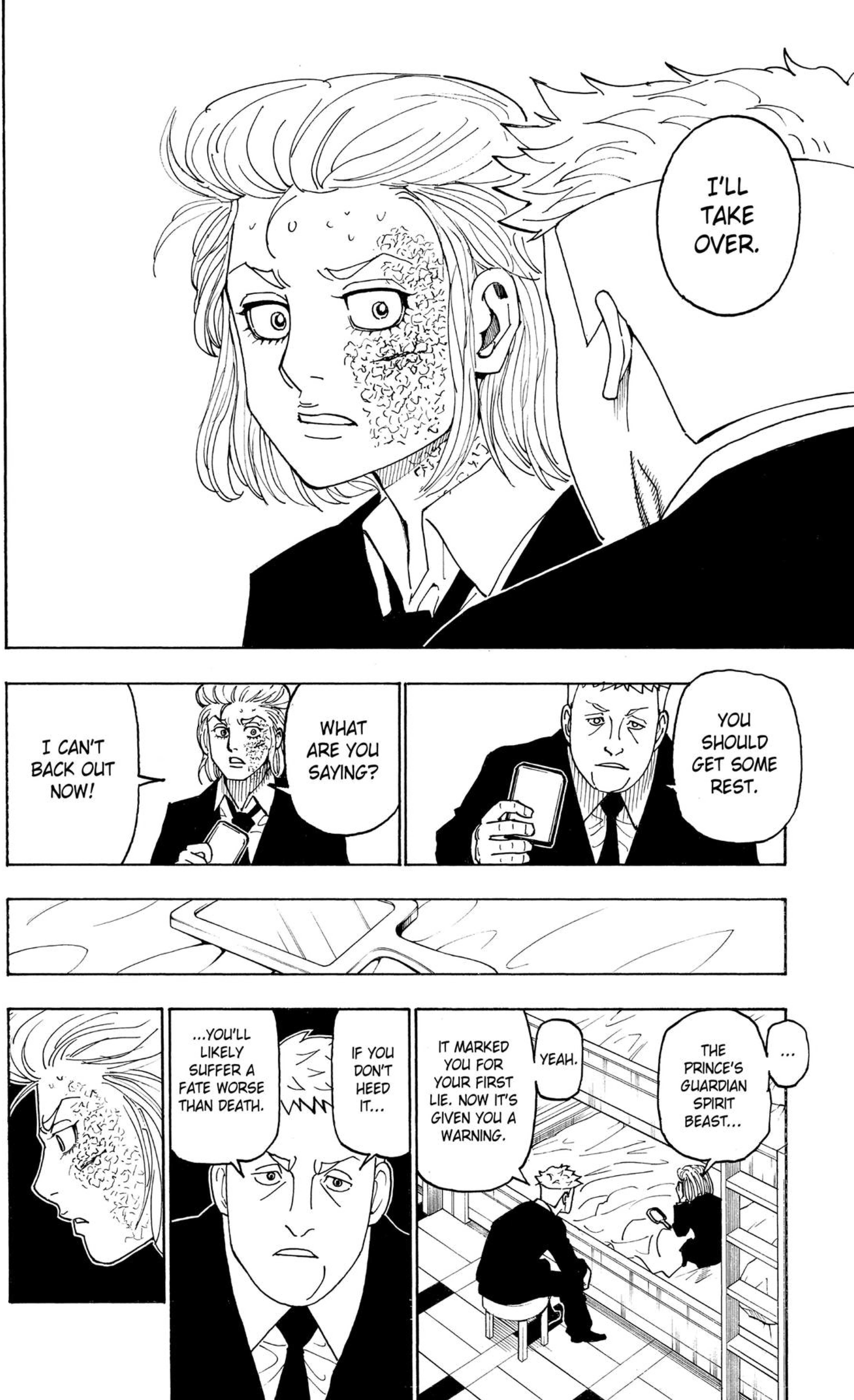

WHAT THE?!
THE PRINCE...
...IS GONE?!
THAT'S NOT ALL...
THERE'S NO BLOOD SPATTER EITHER?!
WAS THAT A GUNSHOT?!
SLAM
THETA!! FREEZE!!
HOW?! IS IT HIS ABILITY?!
IMPOSSIBLE!! HE WAS IN ZETSU...

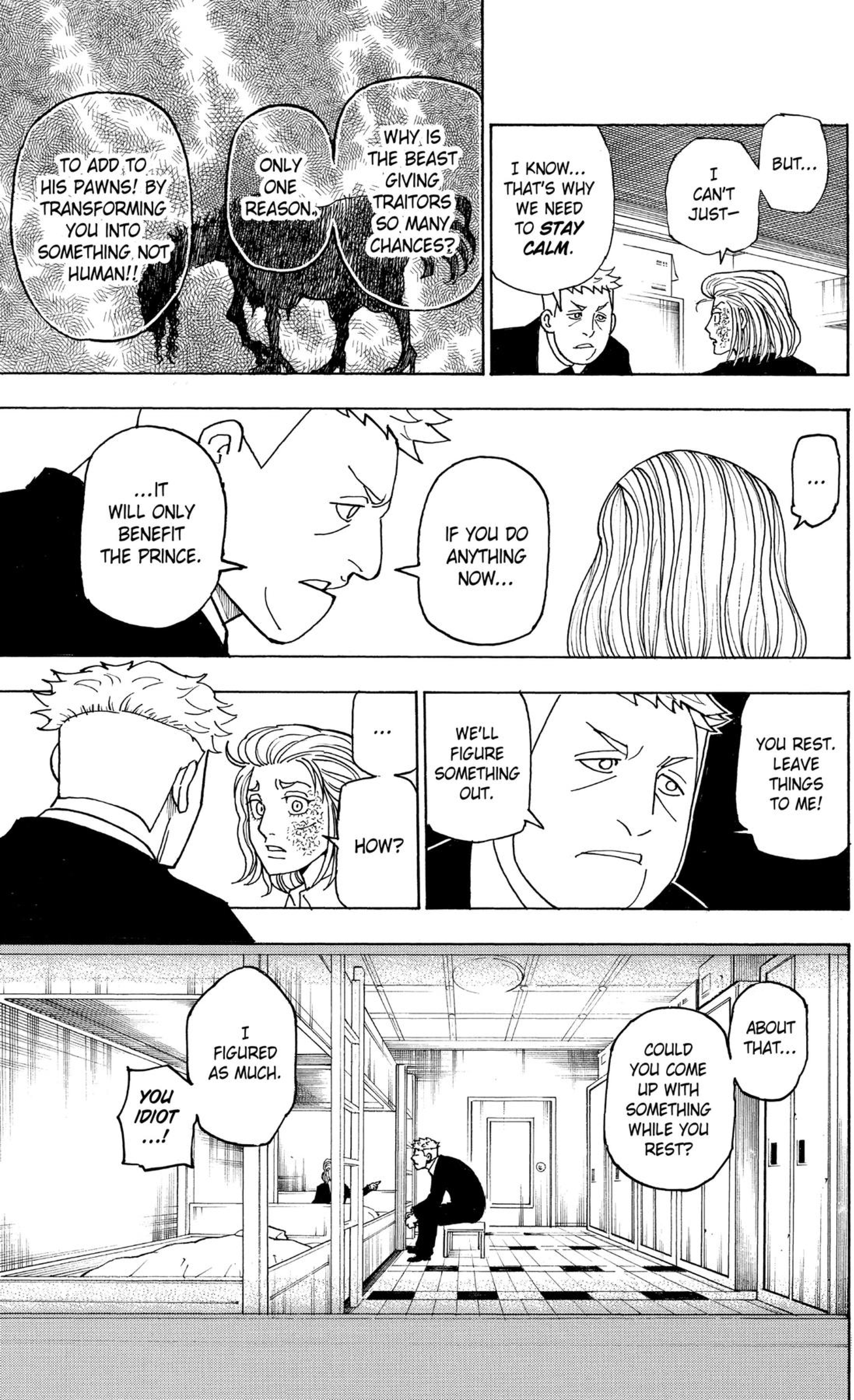

IT'S A PART OF TRAINING. IT'S ALL GOOD.
BBMP
BBMP
HOW CAN IT BE?
HOW WAS MY ZETSU, THETA, DEAR?
I WAS TOTALLY UNFAZED BY THE GUNSHOT.
BBMP
I KNOW I KILLED HIM!
BBMP
HE WAS *THERE*!! THE BLOOD! GRAY MATTER!! ALL OVER THE FLOOR!!!
BBMP
THIS IS GOING TOO FAR, THETA!!
SIRE, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW...
GRRR
GRRRR

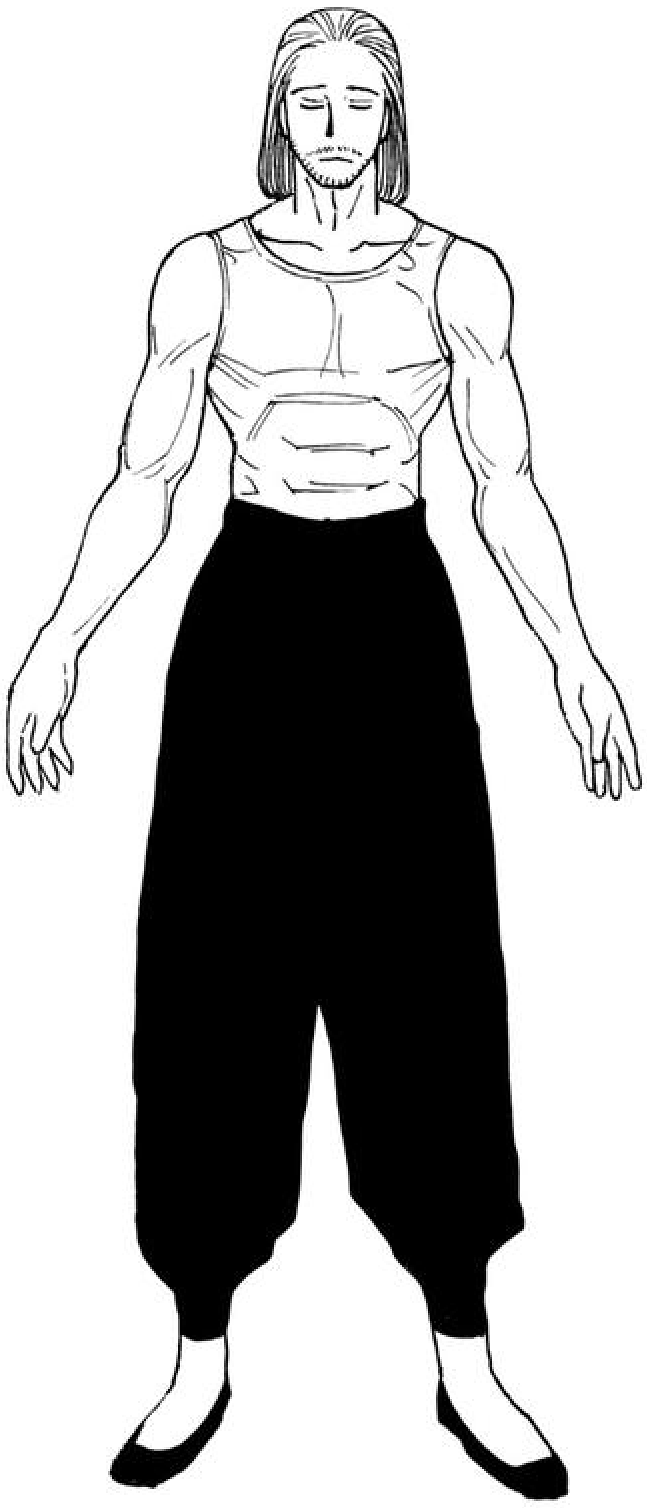

HEY!
!
UNH!
KOFF
...
...
YOU SHOULD TAKE A BREAK, THETA, DEAR.
YOU WERE TENSE THIS WHOLE TIME...
!
IF...
...YOU ANSWER THE PRINCE'S NEXT QUESTION WITH A LIE...
YOU WILL NO LONGER BE HUMAN.
THUD


MISSING TIME?
YES.
WE HEARD A GUNSHOT, AND THE MOMENT WE HEADED OVER...
...A BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE APPEARED IN FRONT OF US.
WE WERE UNABLE TO MOVE.
WE THINK IT WAS DUE TO THE MUSIC BROADCAST.
IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE EIGHTH PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ'S STUPID RAP, RIGHT?
YES.
THE PERFORMANCE WAS BY A MEMBER OF THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION BY THE NAME OF MELODY.
CALL HER OVER.
MAKE IT SOUND LIKE AN INVITATION.
IF IT'S NOT A SUMMONS, THEY MIGHT REFUSE.
IT'S A FEELER.
WE CAN MAKE INFERENCES BASED ON THEIR RESPONSE.
...

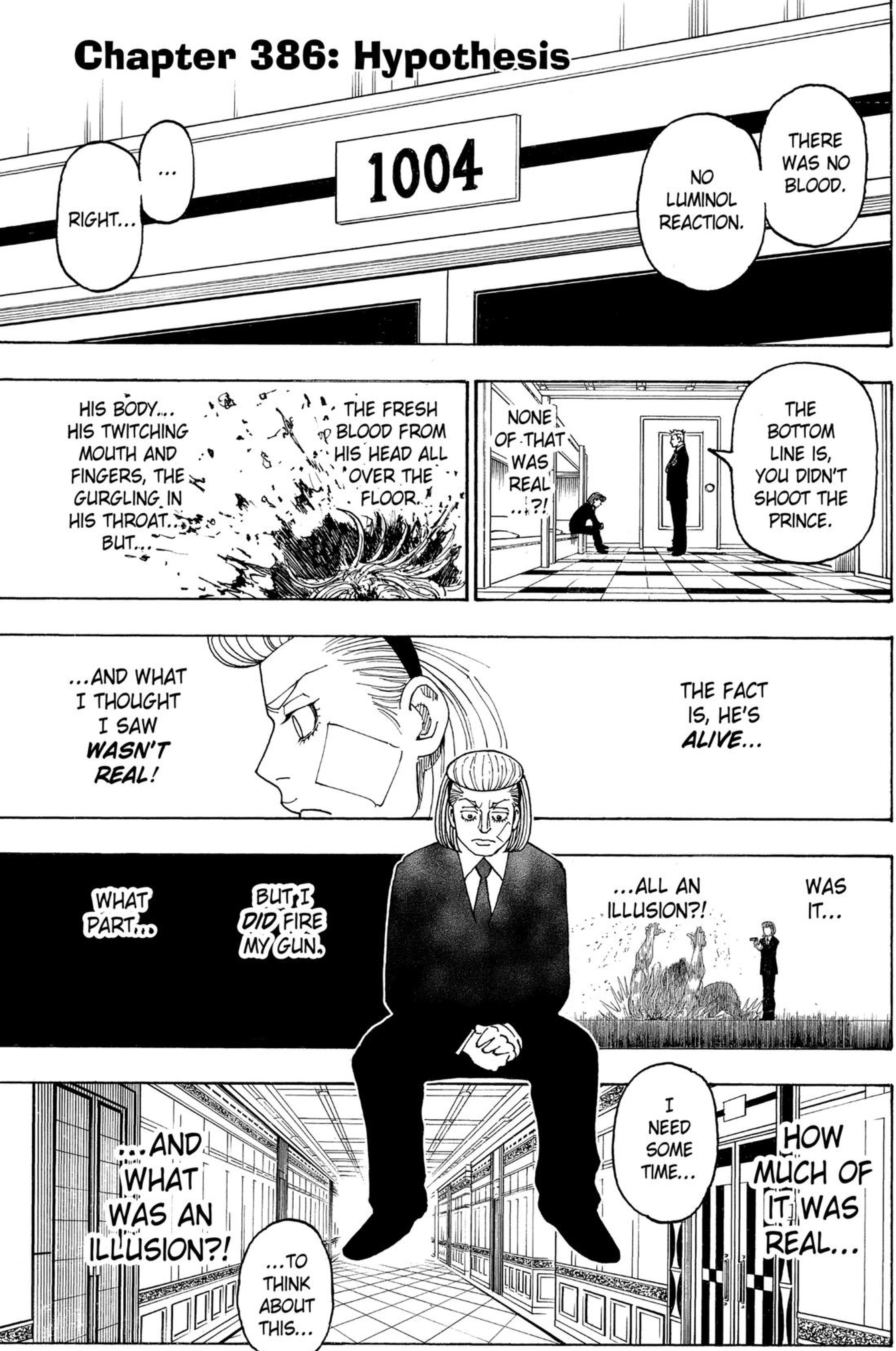

CAN I TRUST YOU?!
OH THETA, DEEARRR!!!
HEY.
THAT WAS FAST.
WHAT TIME IS IT?!
IT'S OKAY.
YOU WERE ASLEEP FOR ONLY 15 MINUTES.
THETA... YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH.

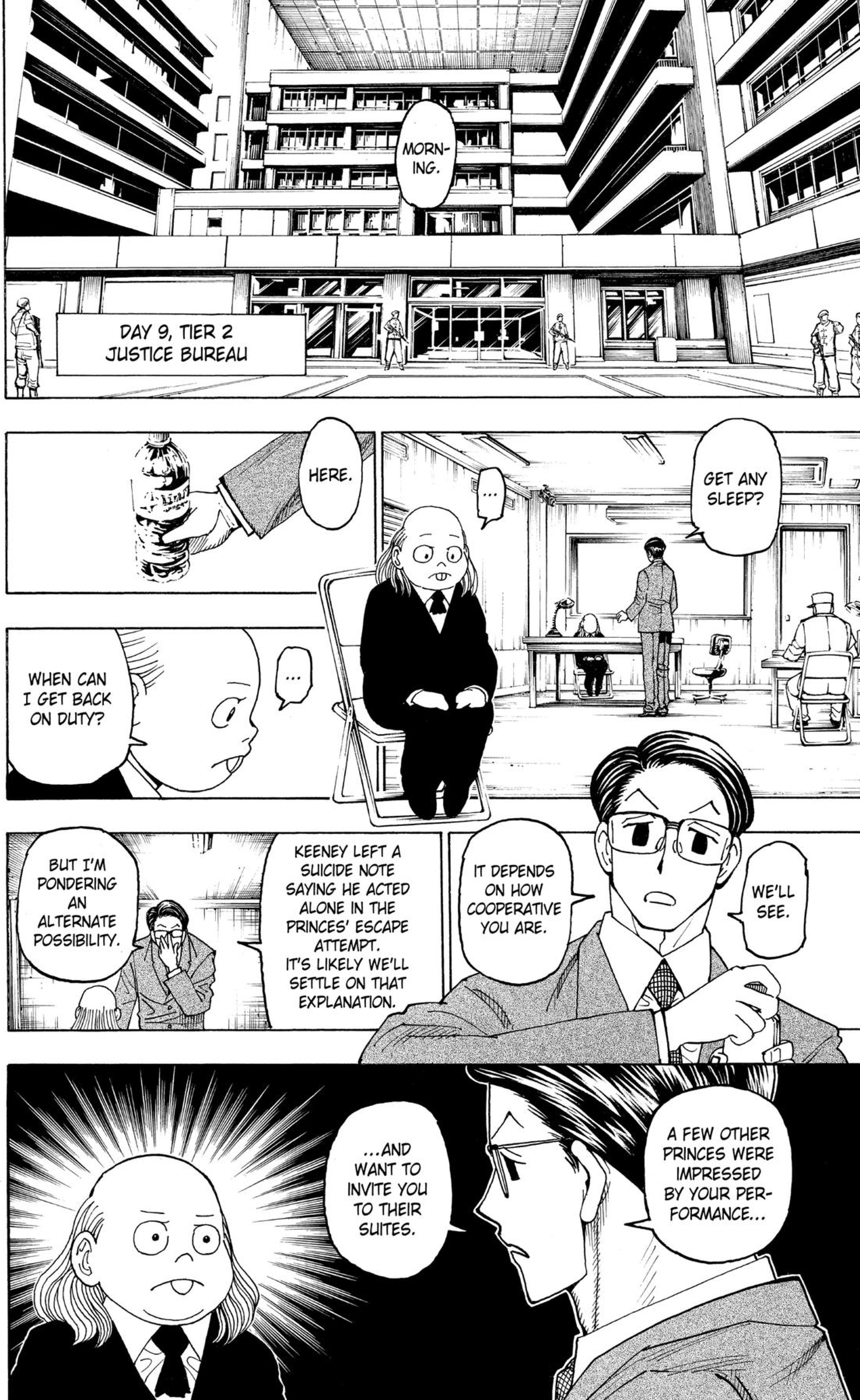

I'LL TAKE OVER.
YOU SHOULD GET SOME REST.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I CAN'T BACK OUT NOW!
...
THE PRINCE'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST...
YEAH.
IT MARKED YOU FOR YOUR FIRST LIE. NOW IT'S GIVEN YOU A WARNING.
IF YOU DON'T HEED IT...
...YOU'LL LIKELY SUFFER A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH.

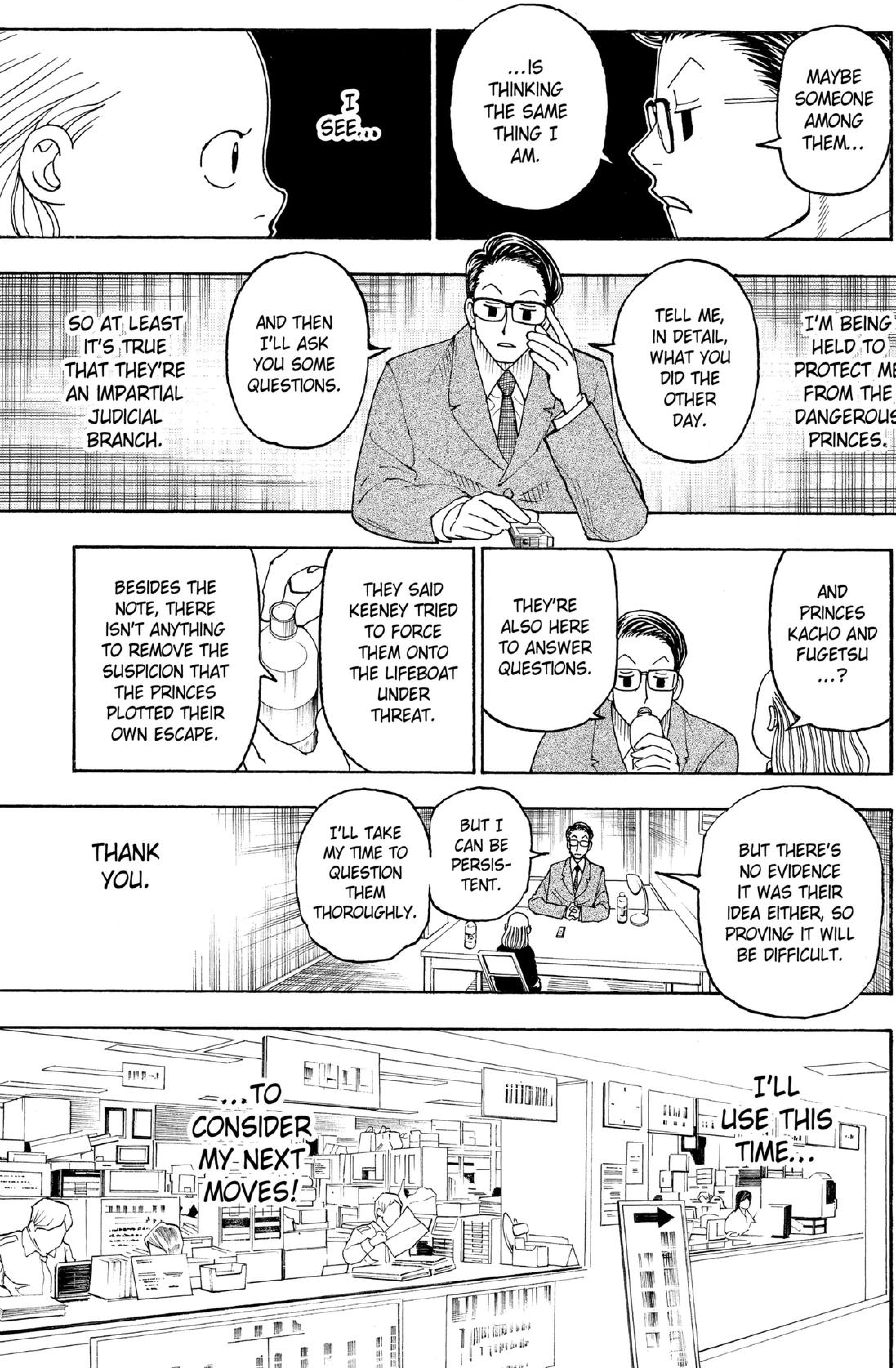

WHY IS THE BEAST GIVING TRAITORS SO MANY CHANCES?
ONLY ONE REASON.
TO ADD TO HIS PAWNS! BY TRANSFORMING YOU INTO SOMETHING NOT HUMAN!!
BUT...
I CAN'T JUST—
I KNOW... THAT'S WHY WE NEED TO *STAY CALM*.
...
IF YOU DO ANYTHING NOW...
...IT WILL ONLY BENEFIT THE PRINCE.
YOU REST. LEAVE THINGS TO ME!
WE'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.
...
HOW?
ABOUT THAT...
COULD YOU COME UP WITH SOMETHING WHILE YOU REST?
I FIGURED AS MUCH.
YOU IDIOT ...!

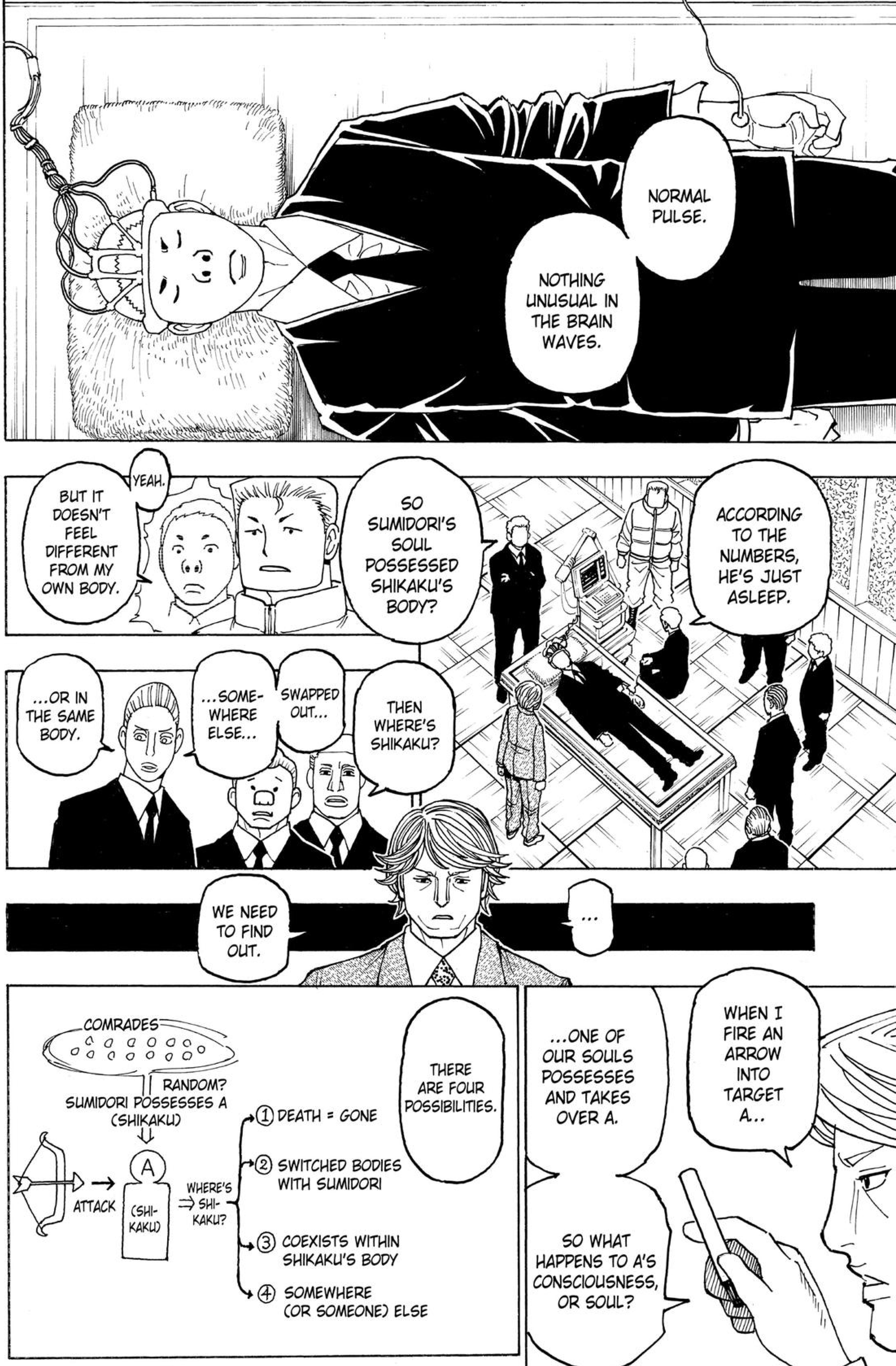


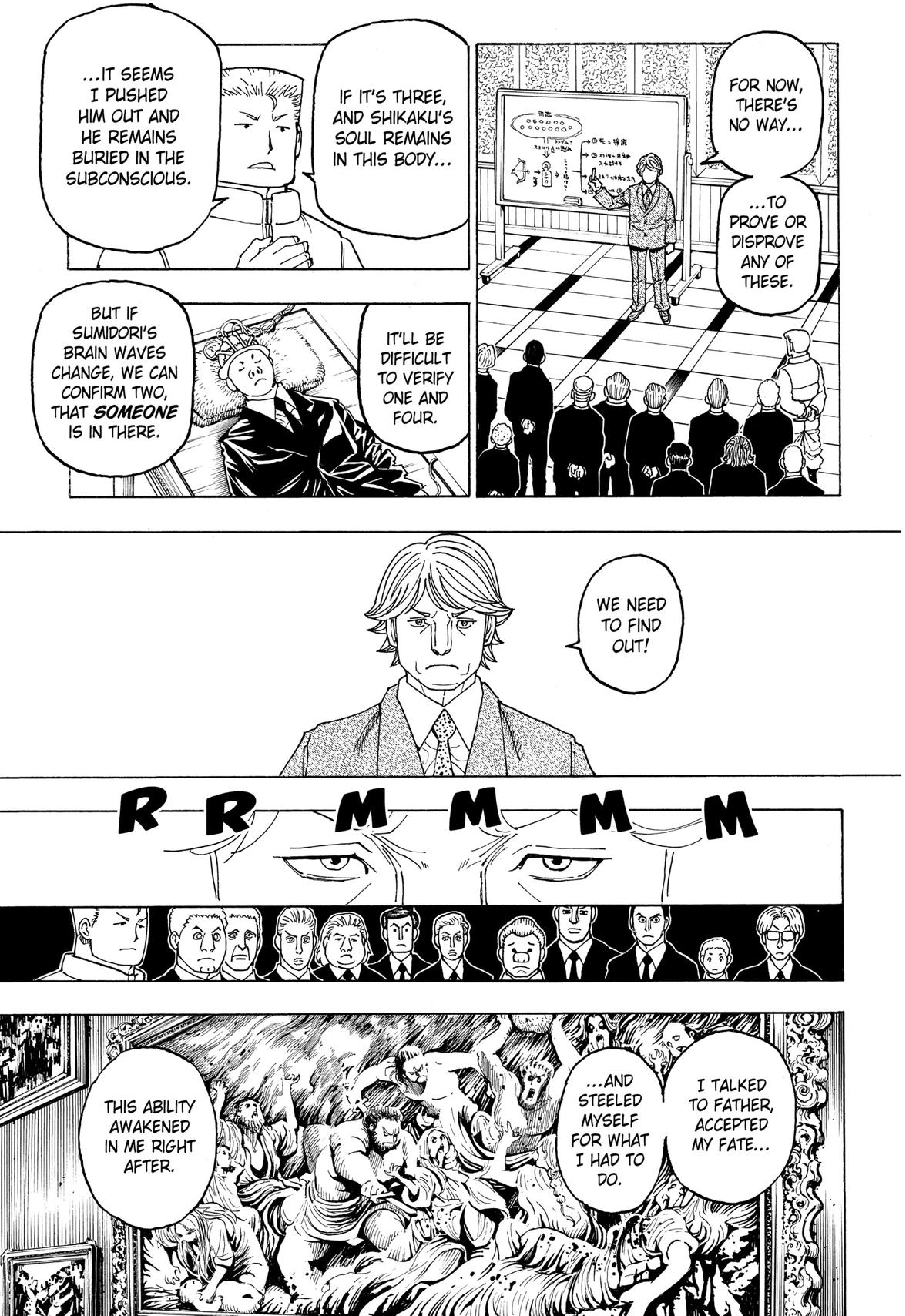
Chapter 386: Hypothesis

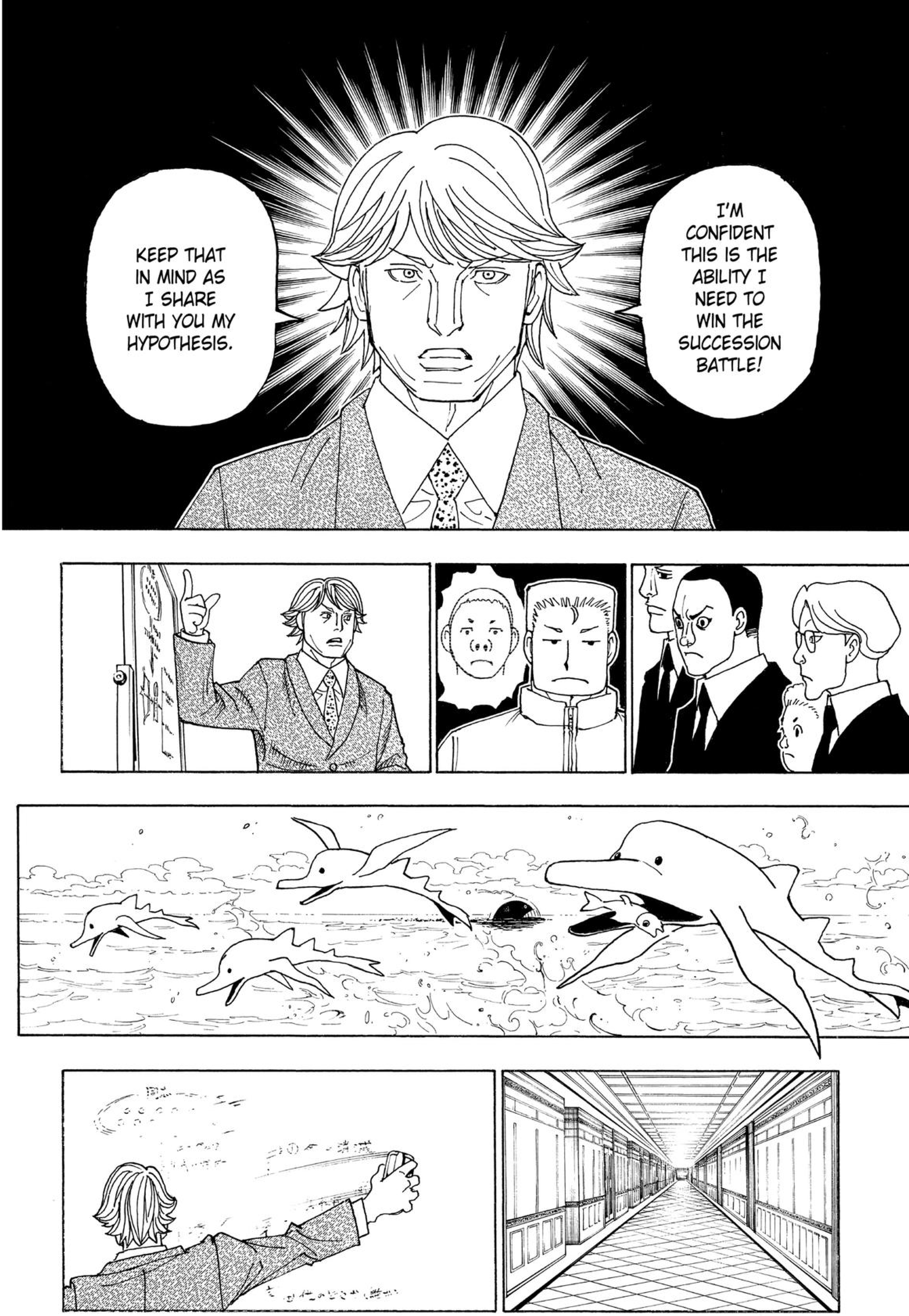

1004
THERE WAS NO BLOOD.
NO LUMINOL REACTION.
...
RIGHT...
THE BOTTOM LINE IS, YOU DIDN'T SHOOT THE PRINCE.
NONE OF THAT WAS REAL...?!
THE FRESH BLOOD FROM HIS HEAD ALL OVER THE FLOOR.
HIS BODY... HIS TWITCHING MOUTH AND FINGERS, THE GURGLING IN HIS THROAT... BUT...
THE FACT IS, HE'S *ALIVE*...
...AND WHAT I THOUGHT I SAW *WASN'T REAL!*
WAS IT...
...ALL AN ILLUSION?!
BUT I *DID* FIRE MY GUN.
WHAT PART...
HOW MUCH OF IT WAS REAL...
I NEED SOME TIME...
...TO THINK ABOUT THIS...
...AND WHAT WAS AN ILLUSION?!

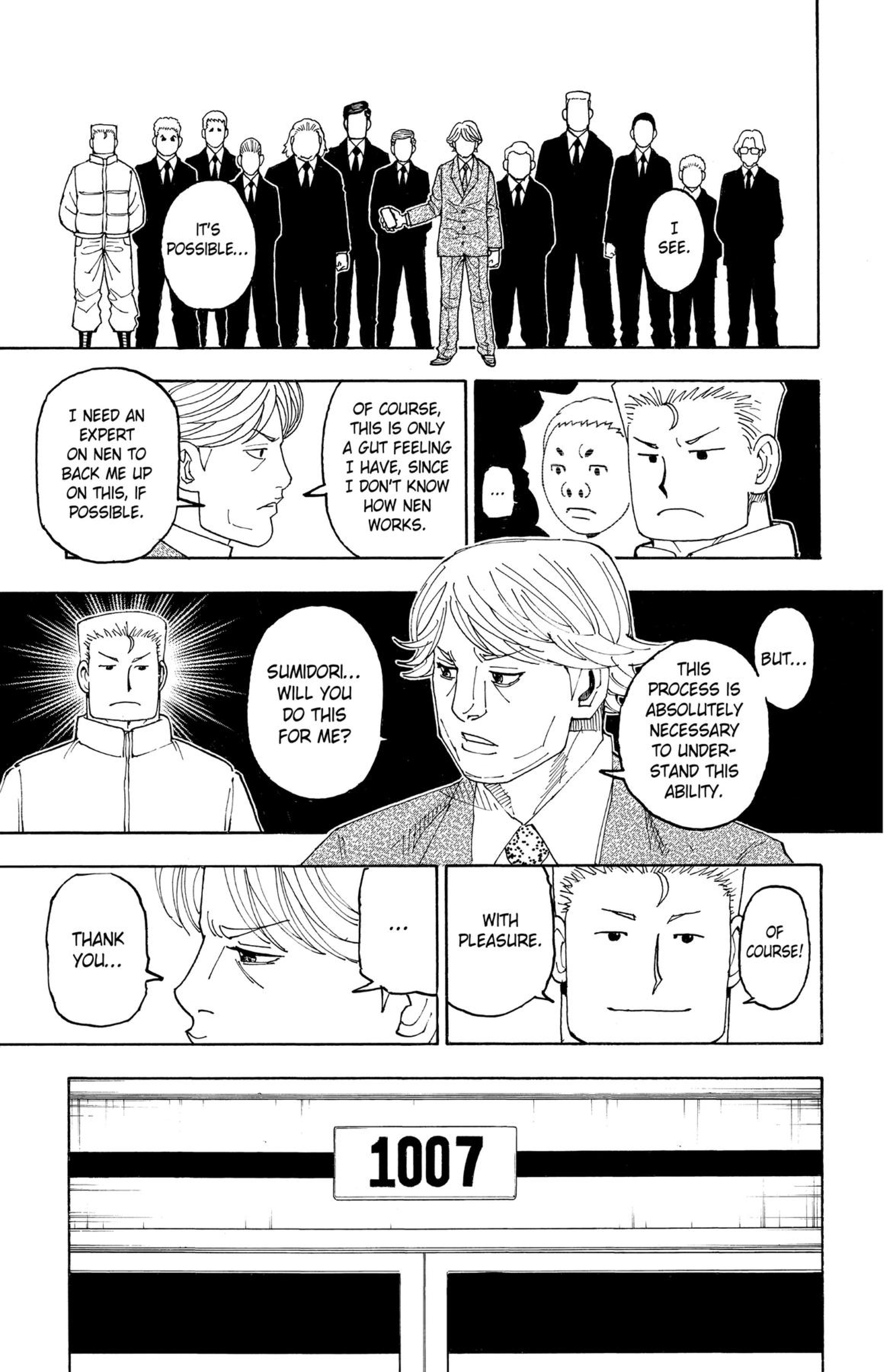

DAY 9, TIER 2 JUSTICE BUREAU
MORNING.
GET ANY SLEEP?
...
HERE.
...
WHEN CAN I GET BACK ON DUTY?
WE'LL SEE.
IT DEPENDS ON HOW COOPERATIVE YOU ARE.
KEENEY LEFT A SUICIDE NOTE SAYING HE ACTED ALONE IN THE PRINCES' ESCAPE ATTEMPT. IT'S LIKELY WE'LL SETTLE ON THAT EXPLANATION.
BUT I'M PONDERING AN ALTERNATE POSSIBILITY.
A FEW OTHER PRINCES WERE IMPRESSED BY YOUR PERFORMANCE...
...AND WANT TO INVITE YOU TO THEIR SUITES.

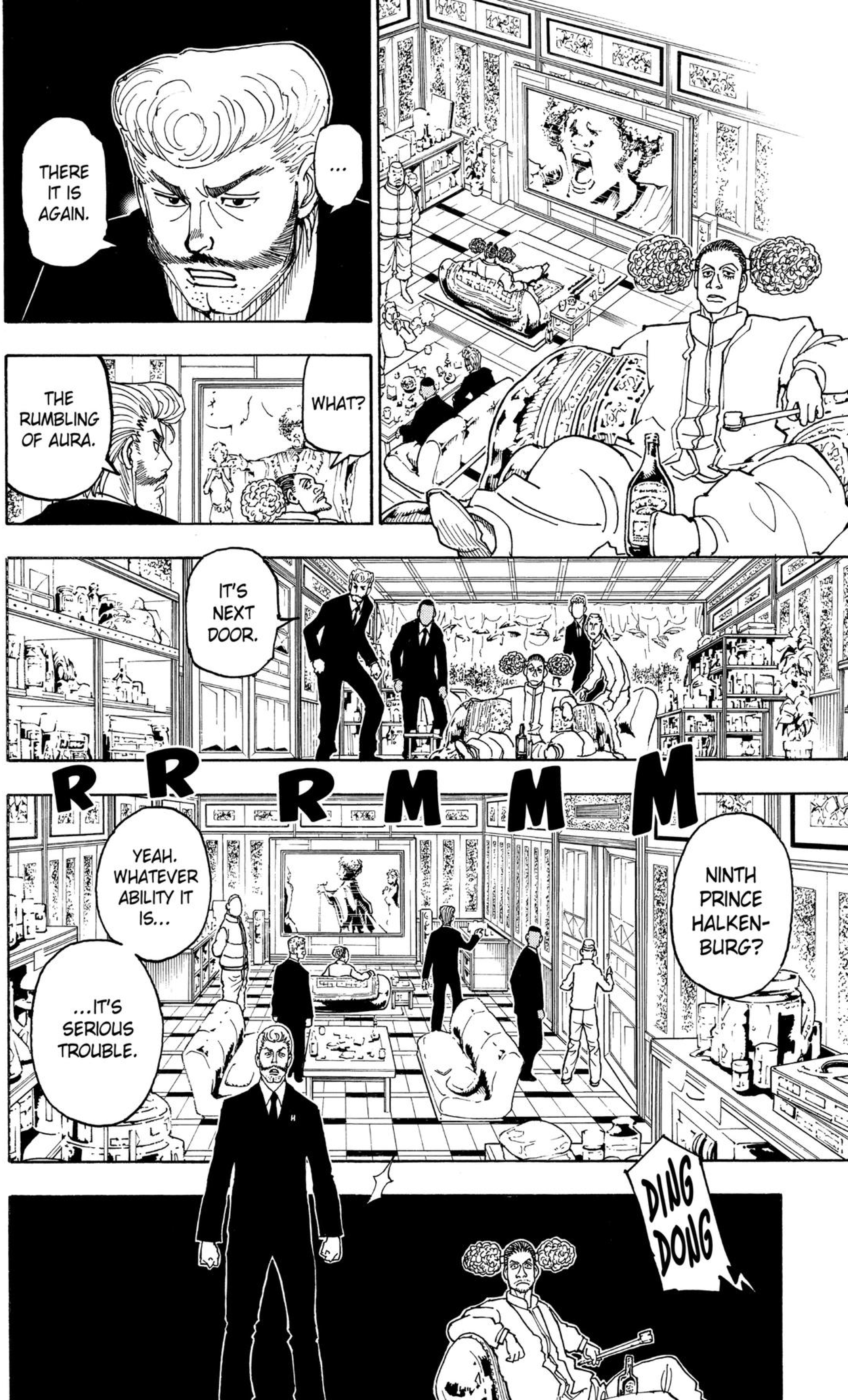

MAYBE SOMEONE AMONG THEM...
...IS THINKING THE SAME THING I AM.
I SEE...
I'M BEING HELD TO PROTECT ME FROM THE DANGEROUS PRINCES.
TELL ME, IN DETAIL, WHAT YOU DID THE OTHER DAY.
AND THEN I'LL ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS.
SO AT LEAST IT'S TRUE THAT THEY'RE AN IMPARTIAL JUDICIAL BRANCH.
AND PRINCES KACHO AND FUGETSU ...?
THEY'RE ALSO HERE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.
THEY SAID KEENEY TRIED TO FORCE THEM ONTO THE LIFEBOAT UNDER THREAT.
BESIDES THE NOTE, THERE ISN'T ANYTHING TO REMOVE THE SUSPICION THAT THE PRINCES PLOTTED THEIR OWN ESCAPE.
BUT THERE'S NO EVIDENCE IT WAS THEIR IDEA EITHER, SO PROVING IT WILL BE DIFFICULT.
BUT I CAN BE PERSISTENT.
I'LL TAKE MY TIME TO QUESTION THEM THOROUGHLY.
THANK YOU.
I'LL USE THIS TIME...
...TO CONSIDER MY NEXT MOVES!

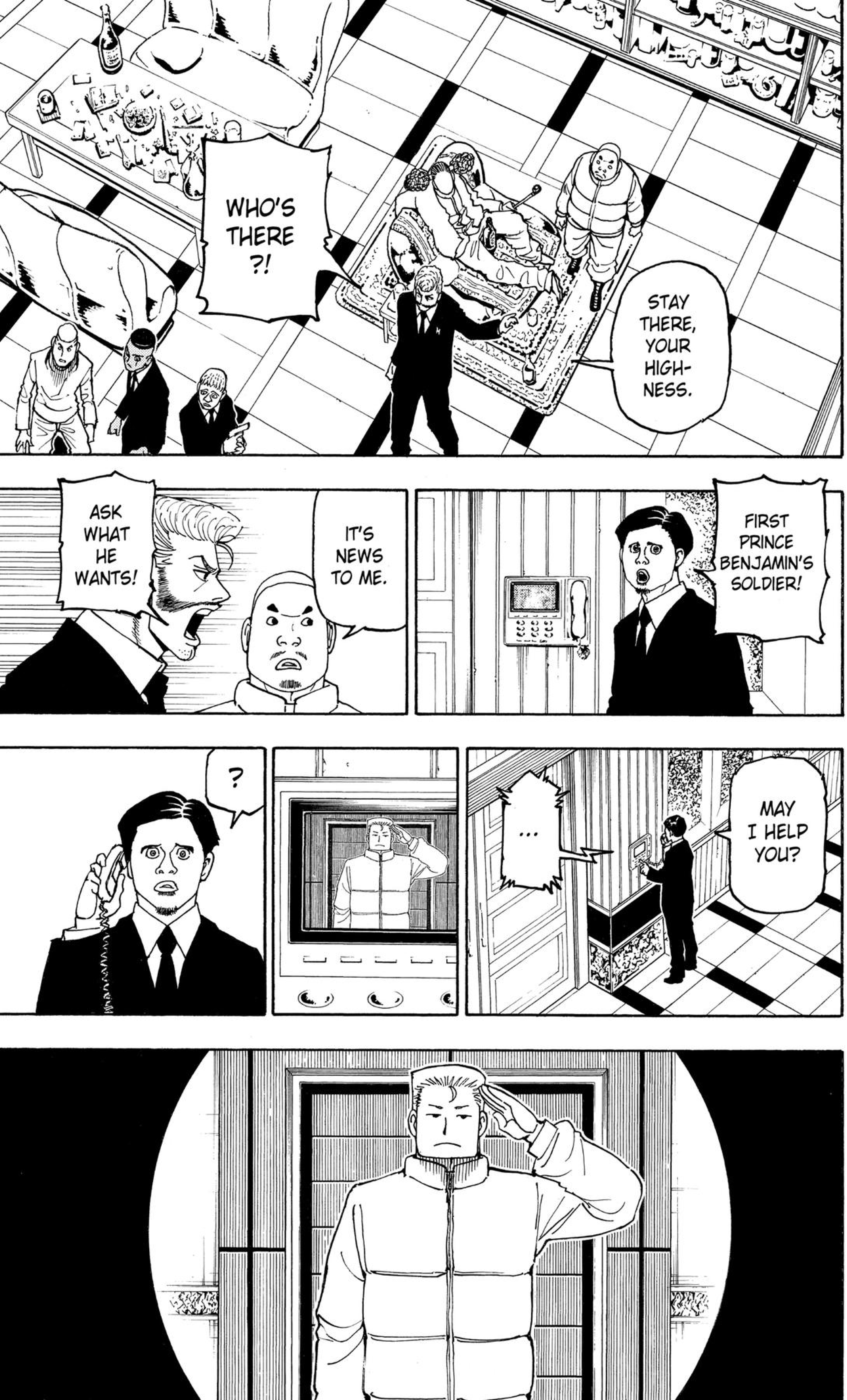

NORMAL PULSE.
NOTHING UNUSUAL IN THE BRAIN WAVES.
ACCORDING TO THE NUMBERS, HE'S JUST ASLEEP.
SO SUMIDORI'S SOUL POSSESSED SHIKAKU'S BODY?
YEAH.
BUT IT DOESN'T FEEL DIFFERENT FROM MY OWN BODY.
THEN WHERE'S SHIKAKU?
SWAPPED OUT...
...SOMEWHERE ELSE...
...OR IN THE SAME BODY.
...
WE NEED TO FIND OUT.
WHEN I FIRE AN ARROW INTO TARGET A..
...ONE OF OUR SOULS POSSESSES AND TAKES OVER A.
SO WHAT HAPPENS TO A'S CONSCIOUSNESS, OR SOUL?
THERE ARE FOUR POSSIBILITIES.
COMRADES
RANDOM?
SUMIDORI POSSESSES A (SHIKAKU)
A
ATTACK
(SHIKAKU)
WHERE'S SHIKAKU?
① DEATH = GONE
② SWITCHED BODIES WITH SUMIDORI
③ COEXISTS WITHIN SHIKAKU'S BODY
④ SOMEWHERE (OR SOMEONE) ELSE

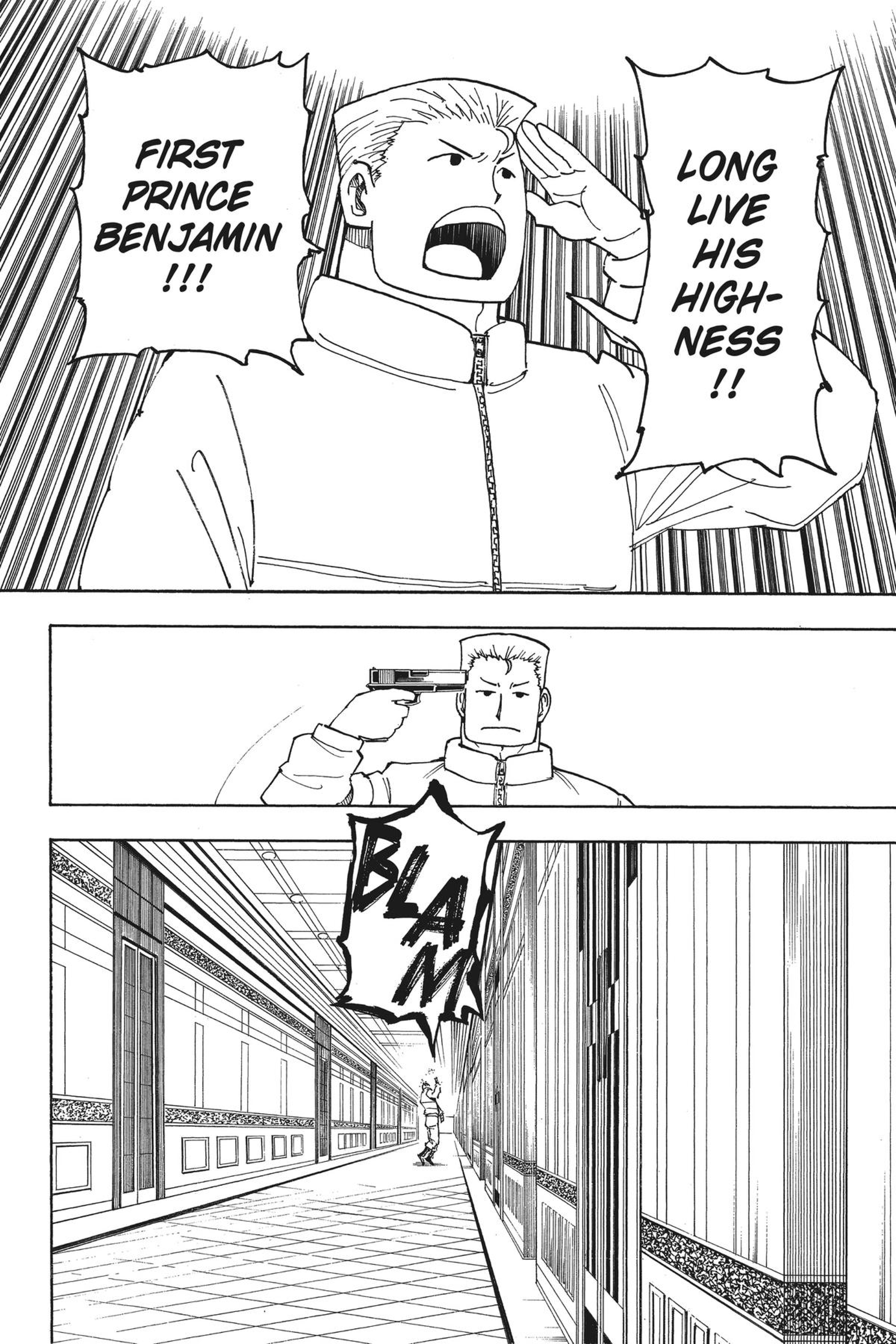

IF IT'S THREE, AND SHIKAKU'S SOUL REMAINS IN THIS BODY...
...IT SEEMS I PUSHED HIM OUT AND HE REMAINS BURIED IN THE SUBCONSCIOUS.
IT'LL BE DIFFICULT TO VERIFY ONE AND FOUR.
BUT IF SUMIDORI'S BRAIN WAVES CHANGE, WE CAN CONFIRM TWO, THAT SOMEONE IS IN THERE.
FOR NOW, THERE'S NO WAY...
...TO PROVE OR DISPROVE ANY OF THESE.
WE NEED TO FIND OUT!
RRMMMM
I TALKED TO FATHER, ACCEPTED MY FATE...
...AND STEELED MYSELF FOR WHAT I HAD TO DO.
THIS ABILITY AWAKENED IN ME RIGHT AFTER.

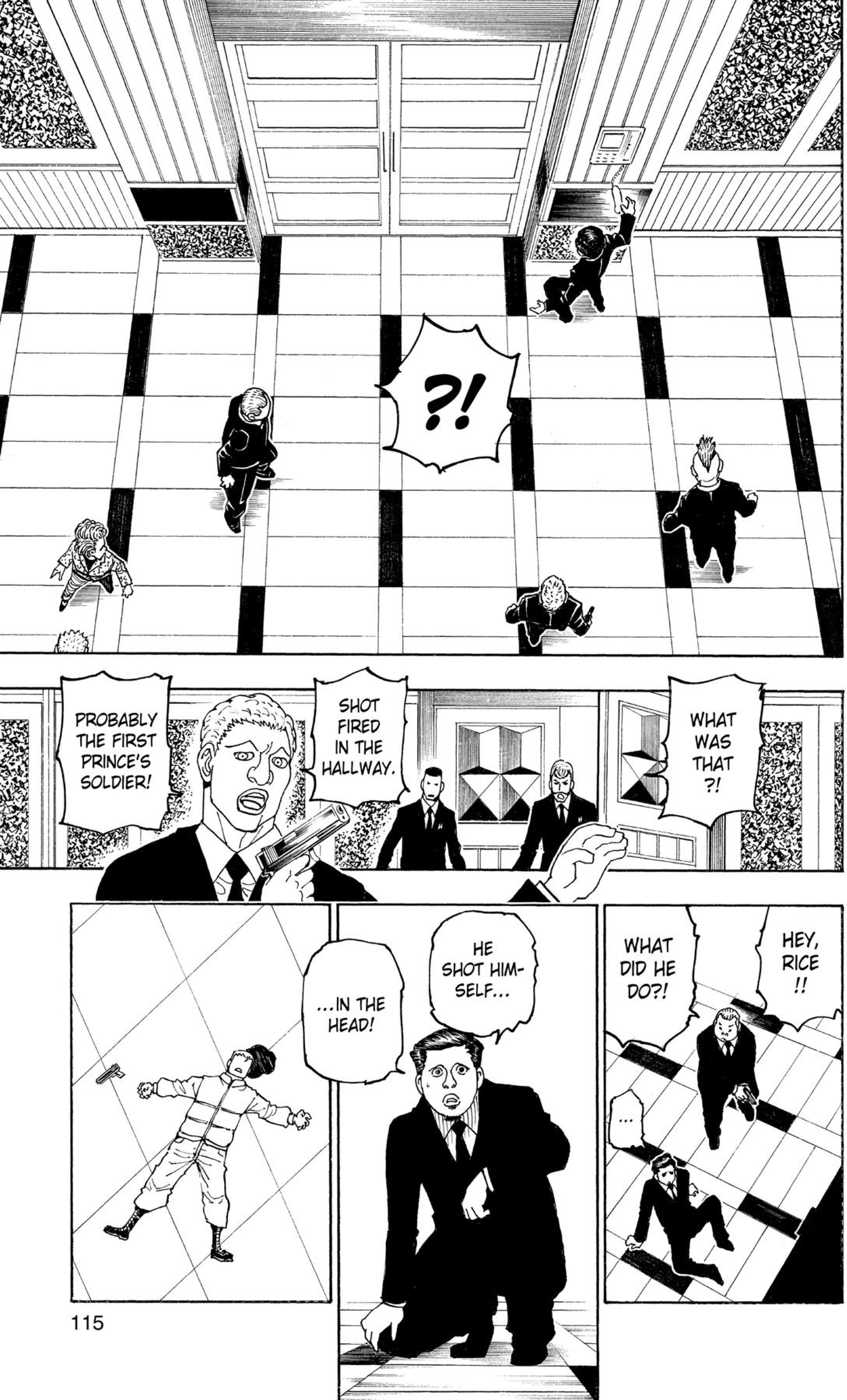

I'M CONFIDENT THIS IS THE ABILITY I NEED TO WIN THE SUCCESSION BATTLE!
KEEP THAT IN MIND AS I SHARE WITH YOU MY HYPOTHESIS.

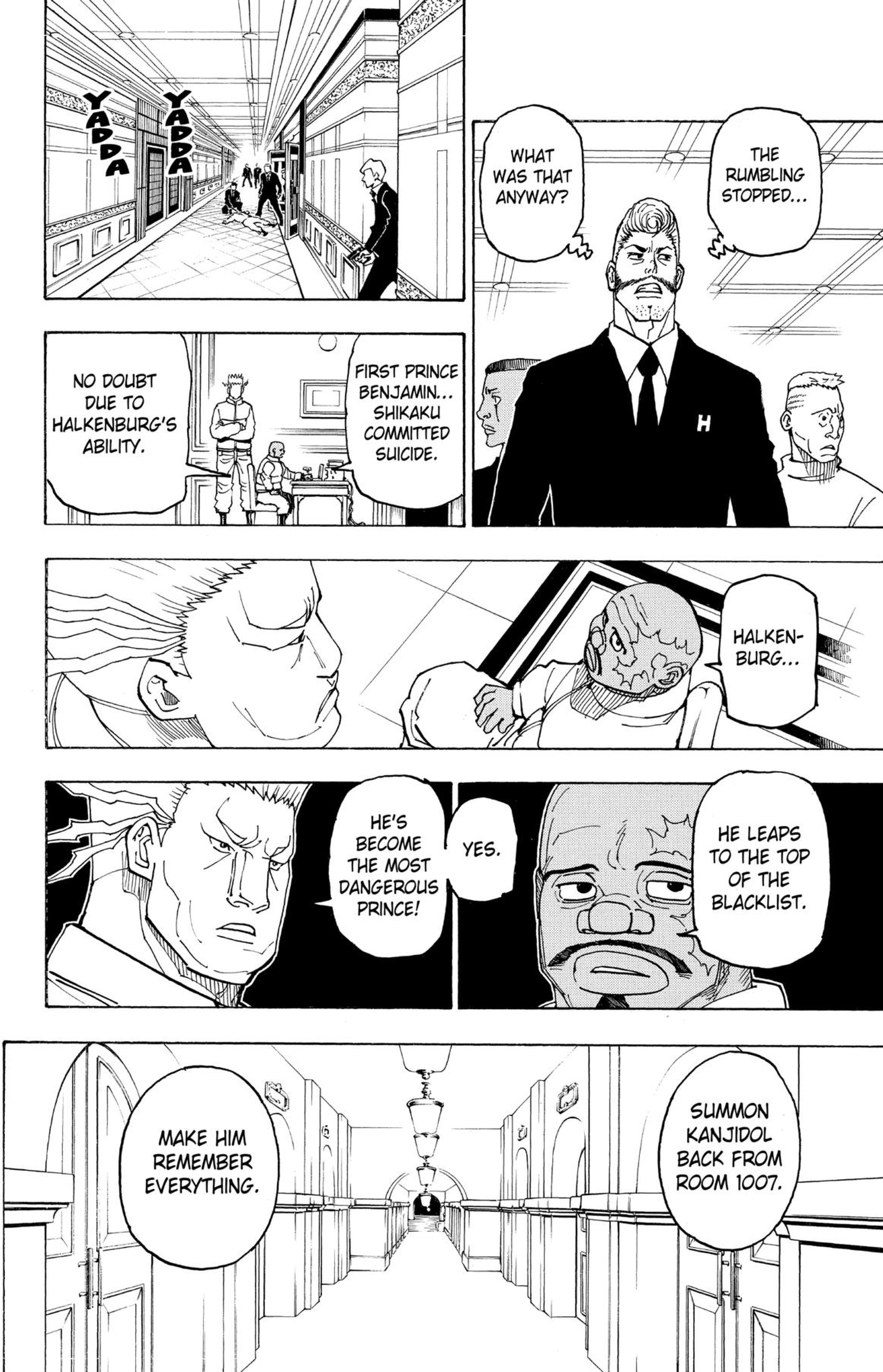

I SEE.
IT'S POSSIBLE...
...
OF COURSE, THIS IS ONLY A GUT FEELING I HAVE, SINCE I DON'T KNOW HOW NEN WORKS.
I NEED AN EXPERT ON NEN TO BACK ME UP ON THIS, IF POSSIBLE.
BUT...
THIS PROCESS IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO UNDERSTAND THIS ABILITY.
SUMIDORI... WILL YOU DO THIS FOR ME?
OF COURSE!
WITH PLEASURE.
...
THANK YOU...
1007

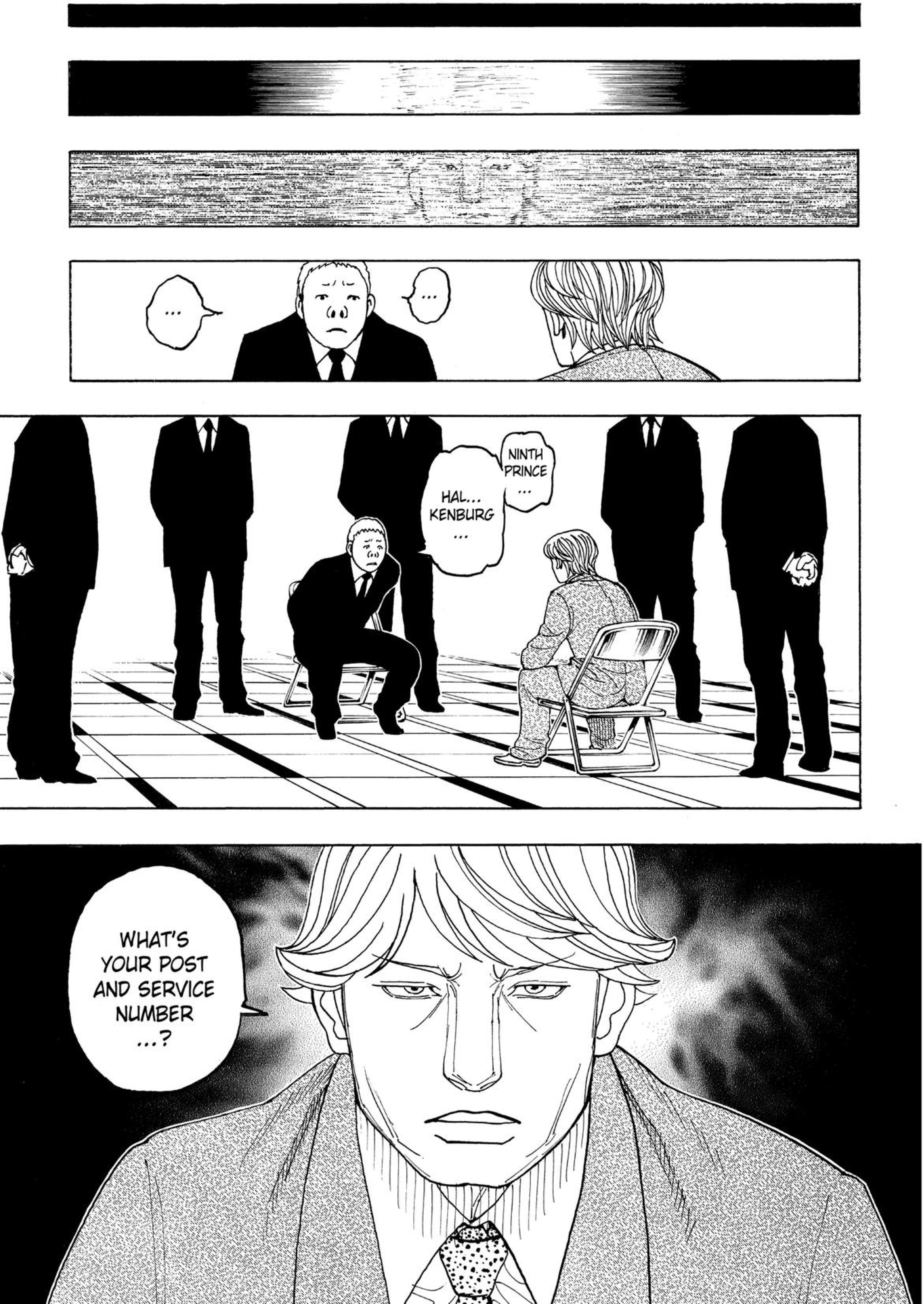

...
THERE IT IS AGAIN.
WHAT?
THE RUMBLING OF AURA.
IT'S NEXT DOOR.
RRRMMMM
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG?
YEAH. WHATEVER ABILITY IT IS...
...IT'S SERIOUS TROUBLE.
DING DONG

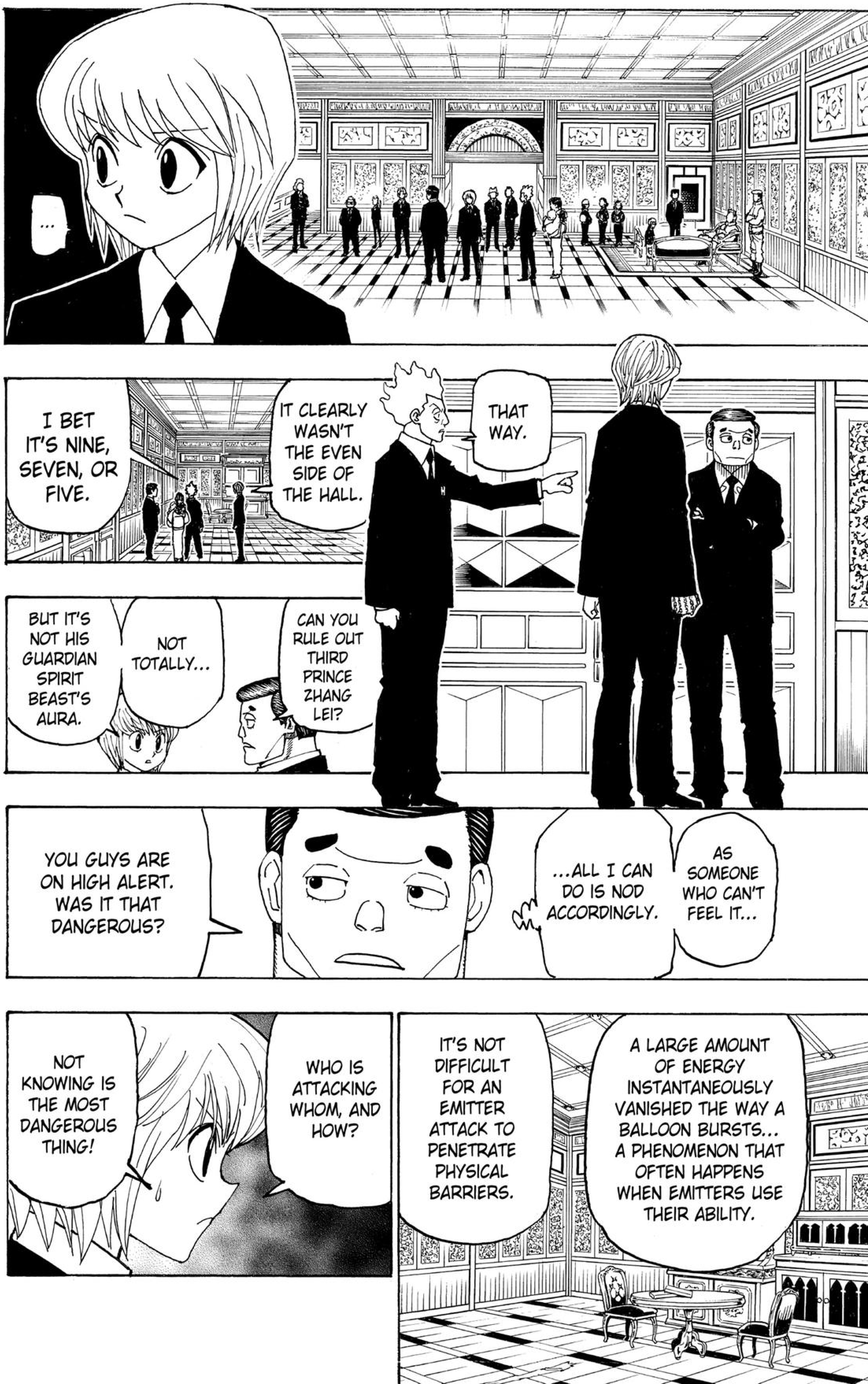

WHO'S THERE ?!
STAY THERE, YOUR HIGHNESS.
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN'S SOLDIER!
IT'S NEWS TO ME.
ASK WHAT HE WANTS!
MAY I HELP YOU?
...
?

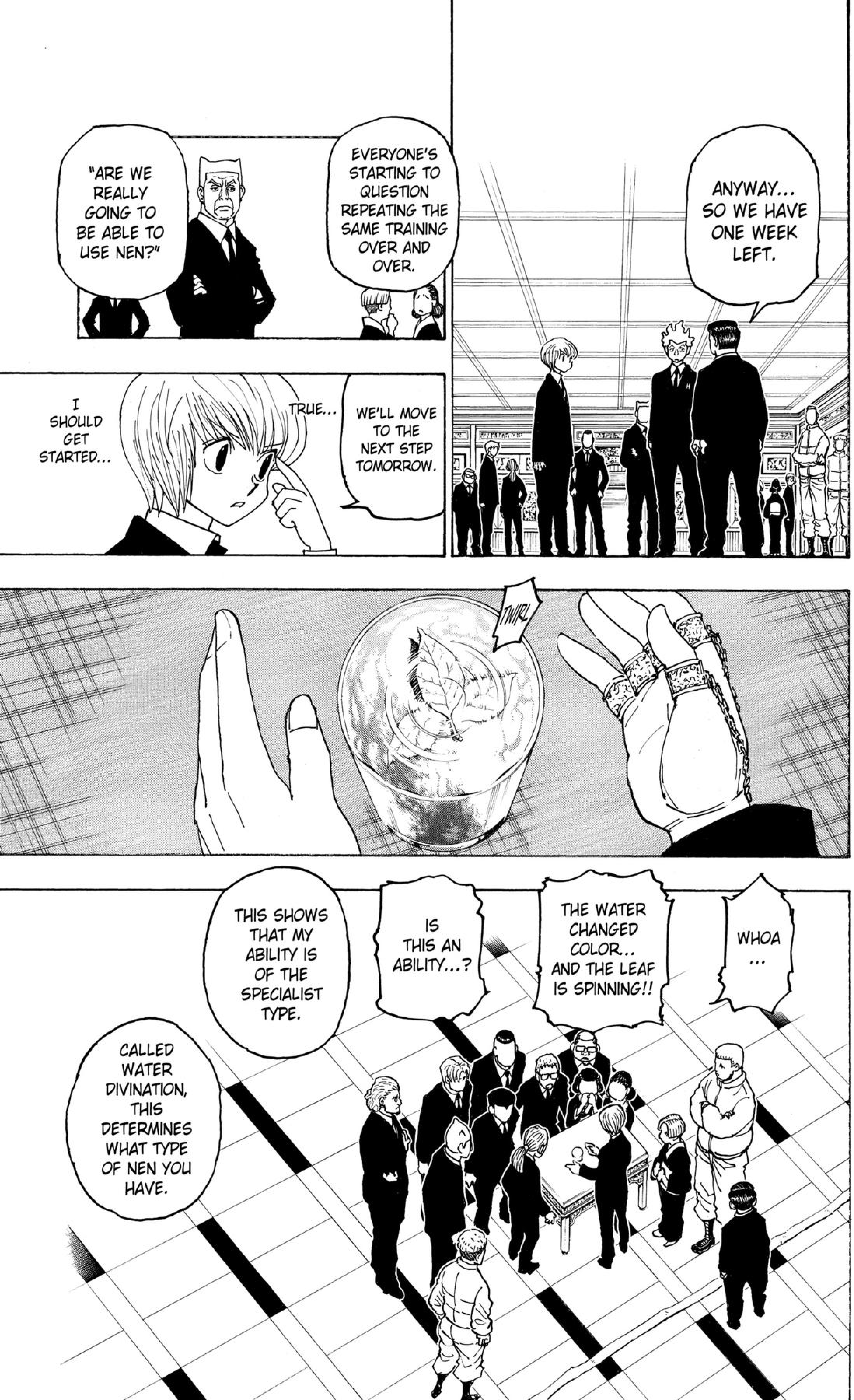

LONG LIVE HIS HIGHNESS!!
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN!!!
BLAM

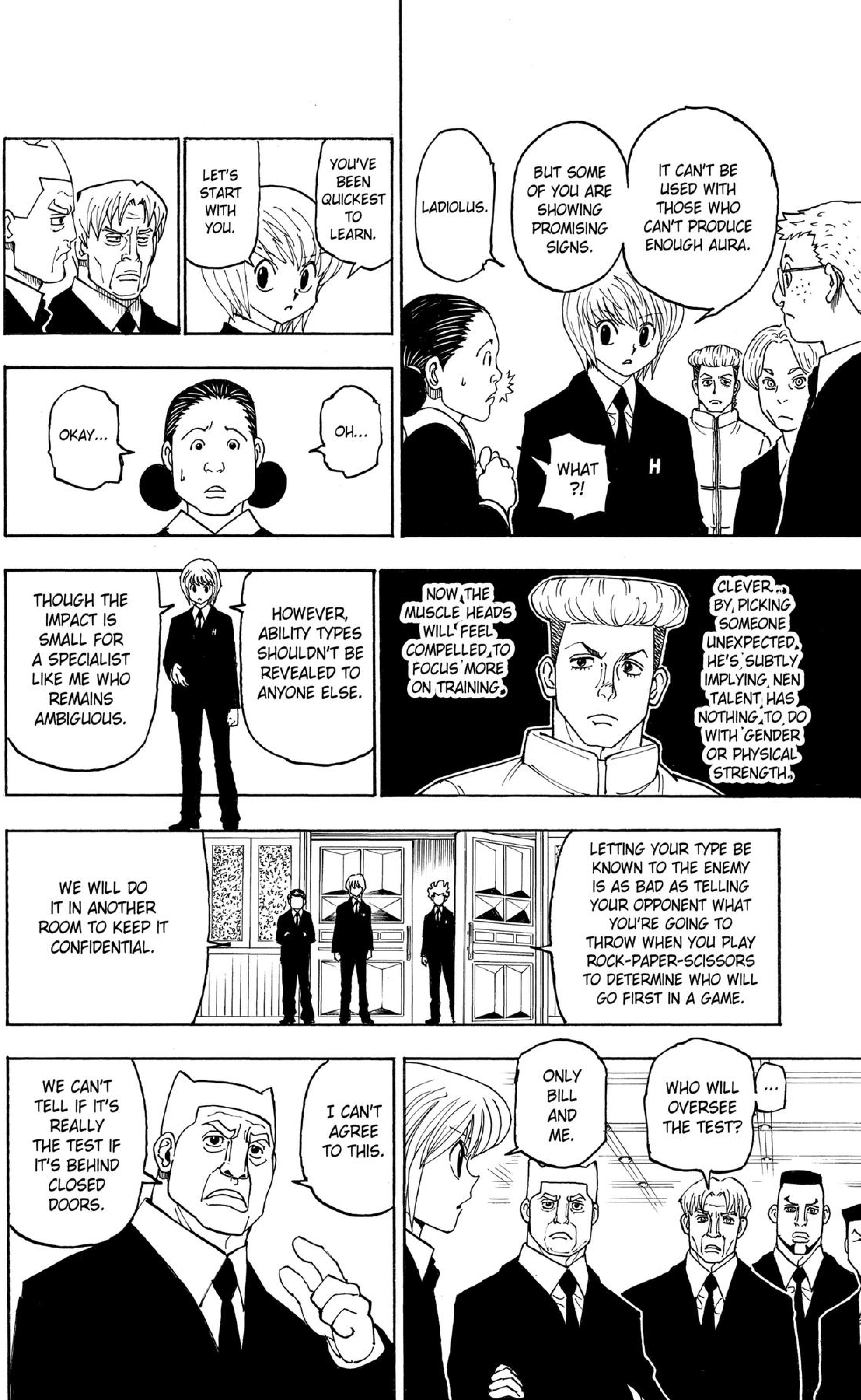

?!
WHAT WAS THAT ?!
SHOT FIRED IN THE HALLWAY.
PROBABLY THE FIRST PRINCE'S SOLDIER!
HEY, RICE !!
WHAT DID HE DO?!
...
HE SHOT HIMSELF...
...IN THE HEAD!

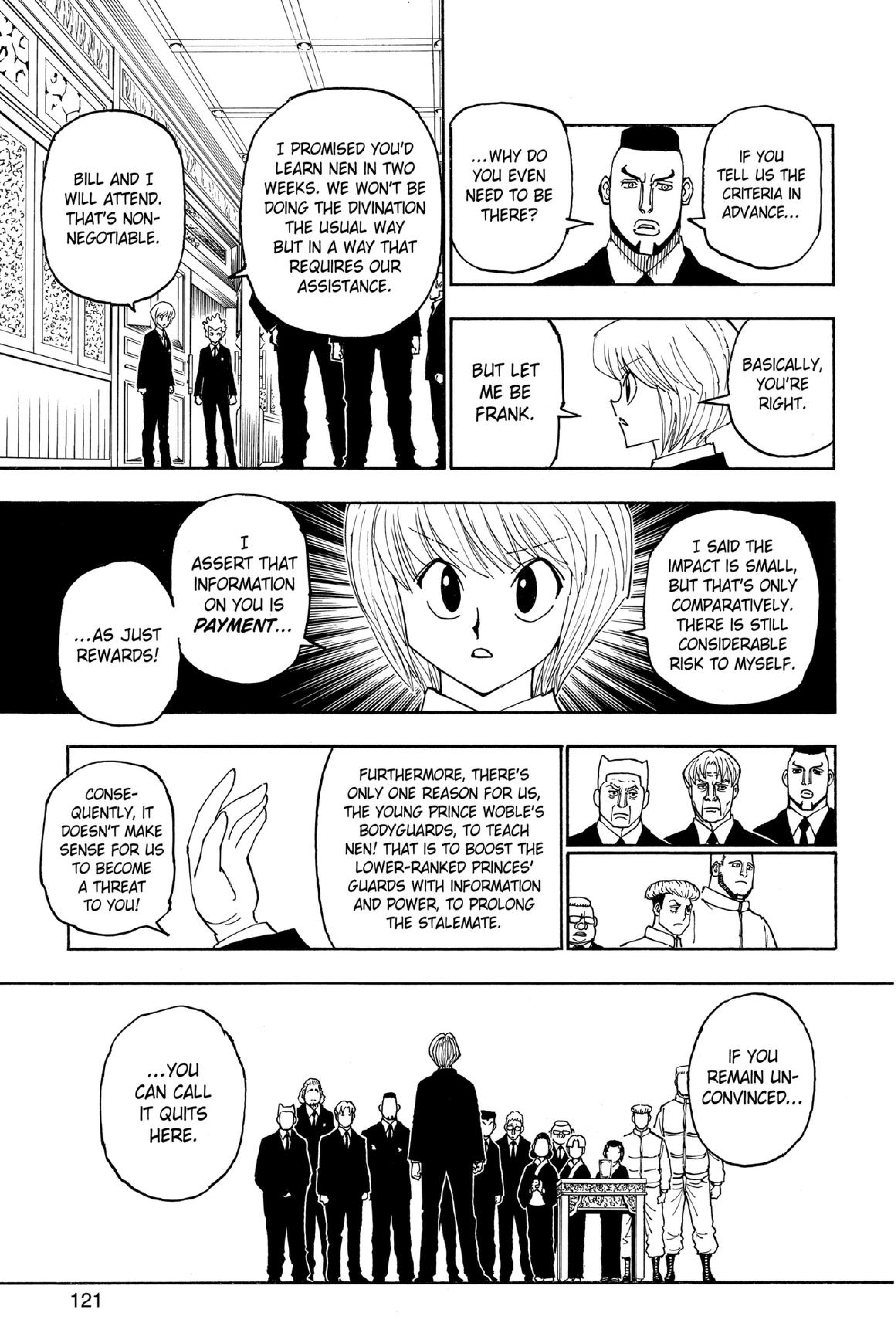

THE RUMBLING STOPPED...
WHAT WAS THAT ANYWAY?
YADDA YADDA
YADDA
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN... SHIKAKU COMMITTED SUICIDE.
NO DOUBT DUE TO HALKENBURG'S ABILITY.
H
HALKENBURG...
HE LEAPS TO THE TOP OF THE BLACKLIST.
HE'S BECOME THE MOST DANGEROUS PRINCE!
YES.
SUMMON KANJIDOL BACK FROM ROOM 1007.
MAKE HIM REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

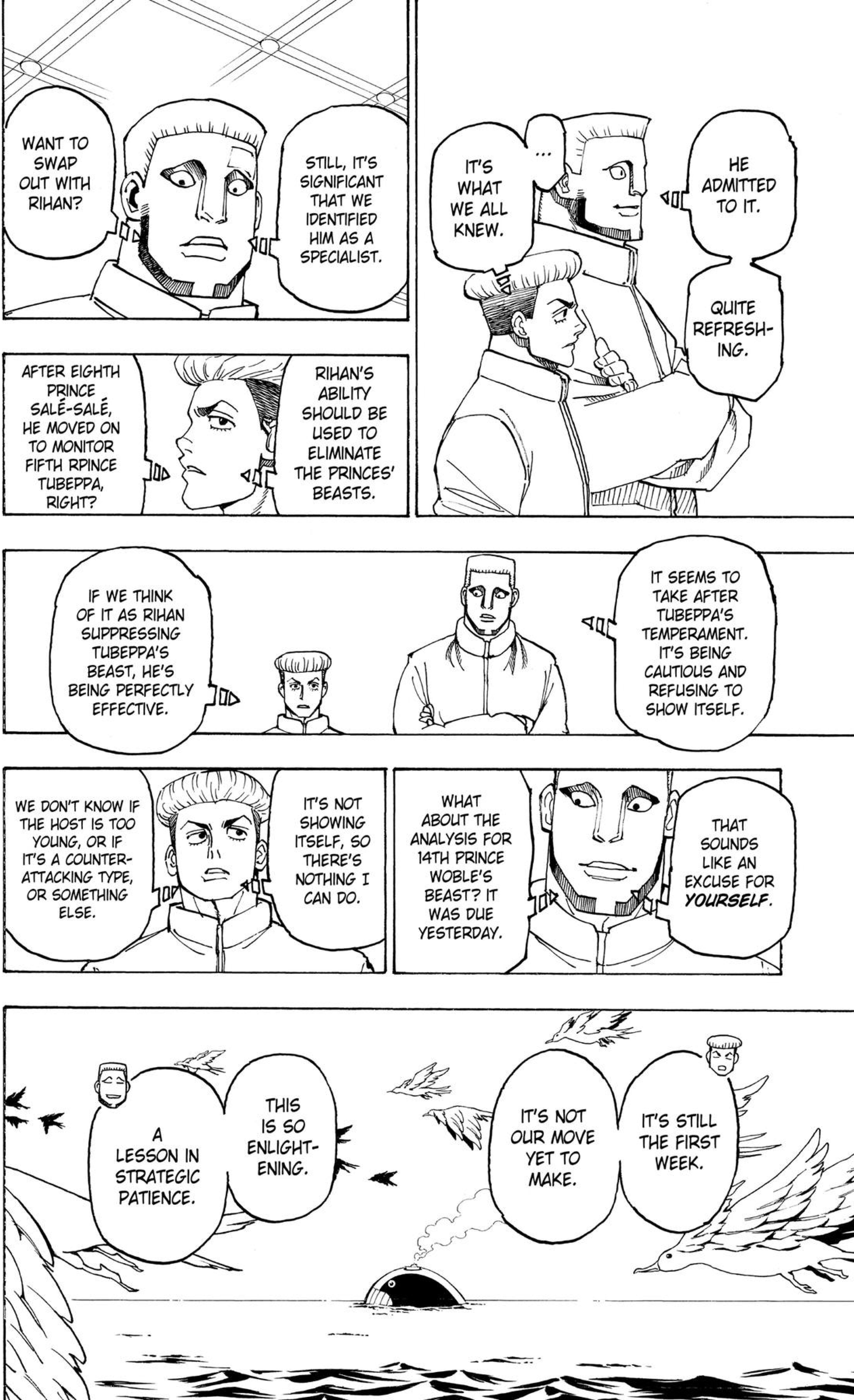

…
…
NINTH PRINCE …
HAL… KENBURG …
WHAT'S YOUR POST AND SERVICE NUMBER …?

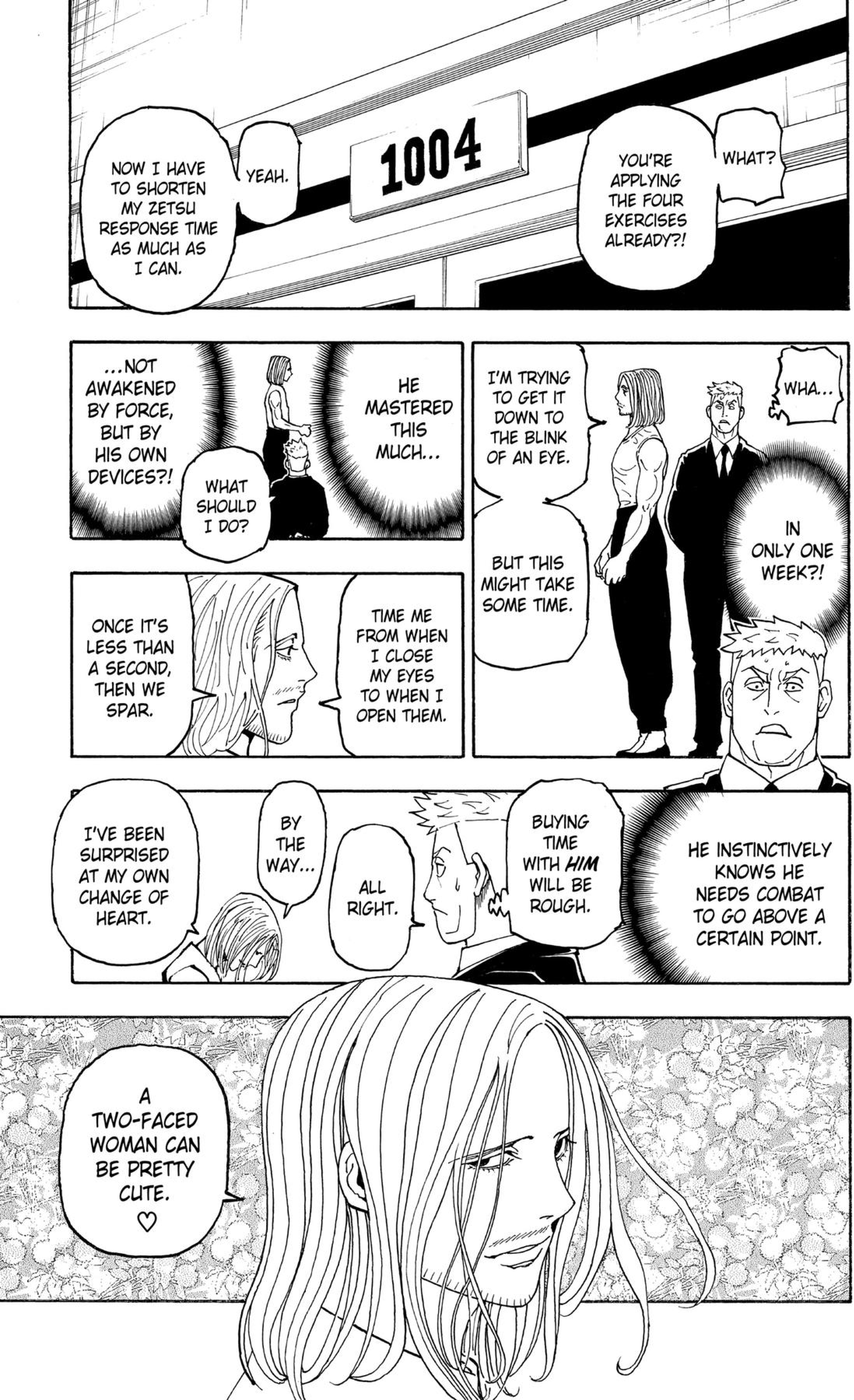

…
THAT WAY.
IT CLEARLY WASN'T THE EVEN SIDE OF THE HALL.
I BET IT'S NINE, SEVEN, OR FIVE.
CAN YOU RULE OUT THIRD PRINCE ZHANG LEI?
NOT TOTALLY…
BUT IT'S NOT HIS GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST'S AURA.
AS SOMEONE WHO CAN'T FEEL IT…
…ALL I CAN DO IS NOD ACCORDINGLY.
YOU GUYS ARE ON HIGH ALERT. WAS IT THAT DANGEROUS?
A LARGE AMOUNT OF ENERGY INSTANTANEOUSLY VANISHED THE WAY A BALLOON BURSTS… A PHENOMENON THAT OFTEN HAPPENS WHEN EMITTERS USE THEIR ABILITY.
IT'S NOT DIFFICULT FOR AN EMITTER ATTACK TO PENETRATE PHYSICAL BARRIERS.
WHO IS ATTACKING WHOM, AND HOW?
NOT KNOWING IS THE MOST DANGEROUS THING!


ANYWAY... SO WE HAVE ONE WEEK LEFT.
EVERYONE'S STARTING TO QUESTION REPEATING THE SAME TRAINING OVER AND OVER.
"ARE WE REALLY GOING TO BE ABLE TO USE NEN?"
WE'LL MOVE TO THE NEXT STEP TOMORROW.
TRUE...
I SHOULD GET STARTED...
TWIRL
WHOA...
THE WATER CHANGED COLOR... AND THE LEAF IS SPINNING!!
IS THIS AN ABILITY...?
THIS SHOWS THAT MY ABILITY IS OF THE SPECIALIST TYPE.
CALLED WATER DIVINATION, THIS DETERMINES WHAT TYPE OF NEN YOU HAVE.

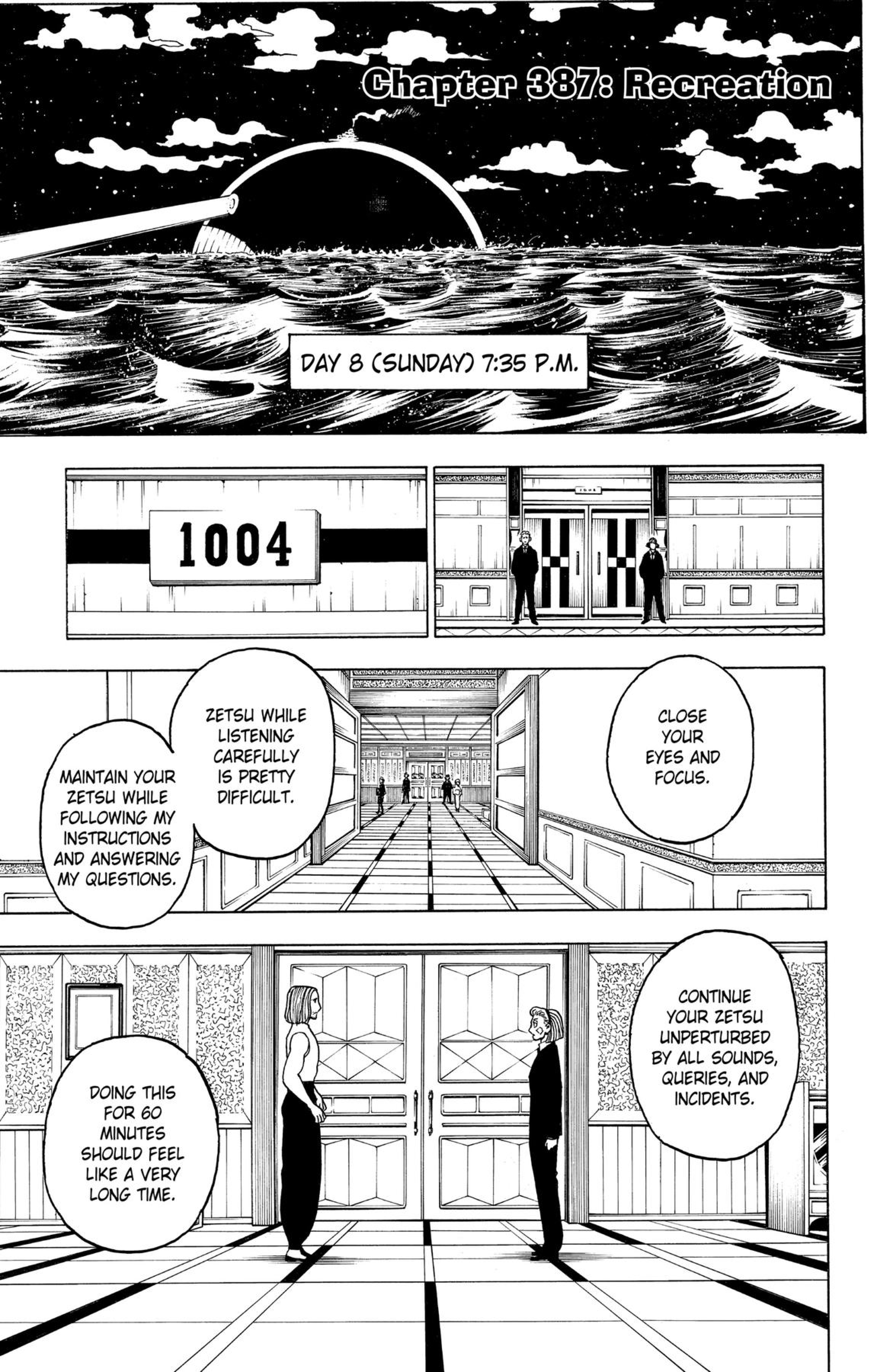

IT CAN'T BE USED WITH THOSE WHO CAN'T PRODUCE ENOUGH AURA.
BUT SOME OF YOU ARE SHOWING PROMISING SIGNS.
LADIOLUS.
WHAT ?!
YOU'VE BEEN QUICKEST TO LEARN.
LET'S START WITH YOU.
OH...
OKAY...
CLEVER... BY PICKING SOMEONE UNEXPECTED, HE'S SUBTLY IMPLYING NEN TALENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH GENDER OR PHYSICAL STRENGTH.
NOW THE MUSCLE HEADS WILL FEEL COMPELLED TO FOCUS MORE ON TRAINING.
THOUGH THE IMPACT IS SMALL FOR A SPECIALIST LIKE ME WHO REMAINS AMBIGUOUS.
HOWEVER, ABILITY TYPES SHOULDN'T BE REVEALED TO ANYONE ELSE.
LETTING YOUR TYPE BE KNOWN TO THE ENEMY IS AS BAD AS TELLING YOUR OPPONENT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO THROW WHEN YOU PLAY ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS TO DETERMINE WHO WILL GO FIRST IN A GAME.
WE WILL DO IT IN ANOTHER ROOM TO KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL.
...
WHO WILL OVERSEE THE TEST?
ONLY BILL AND ME.
I CAN'T AGREE TO THIS.
WE CAN'T TELL IF IT'S REALLY THE TEST IF IT'S BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.

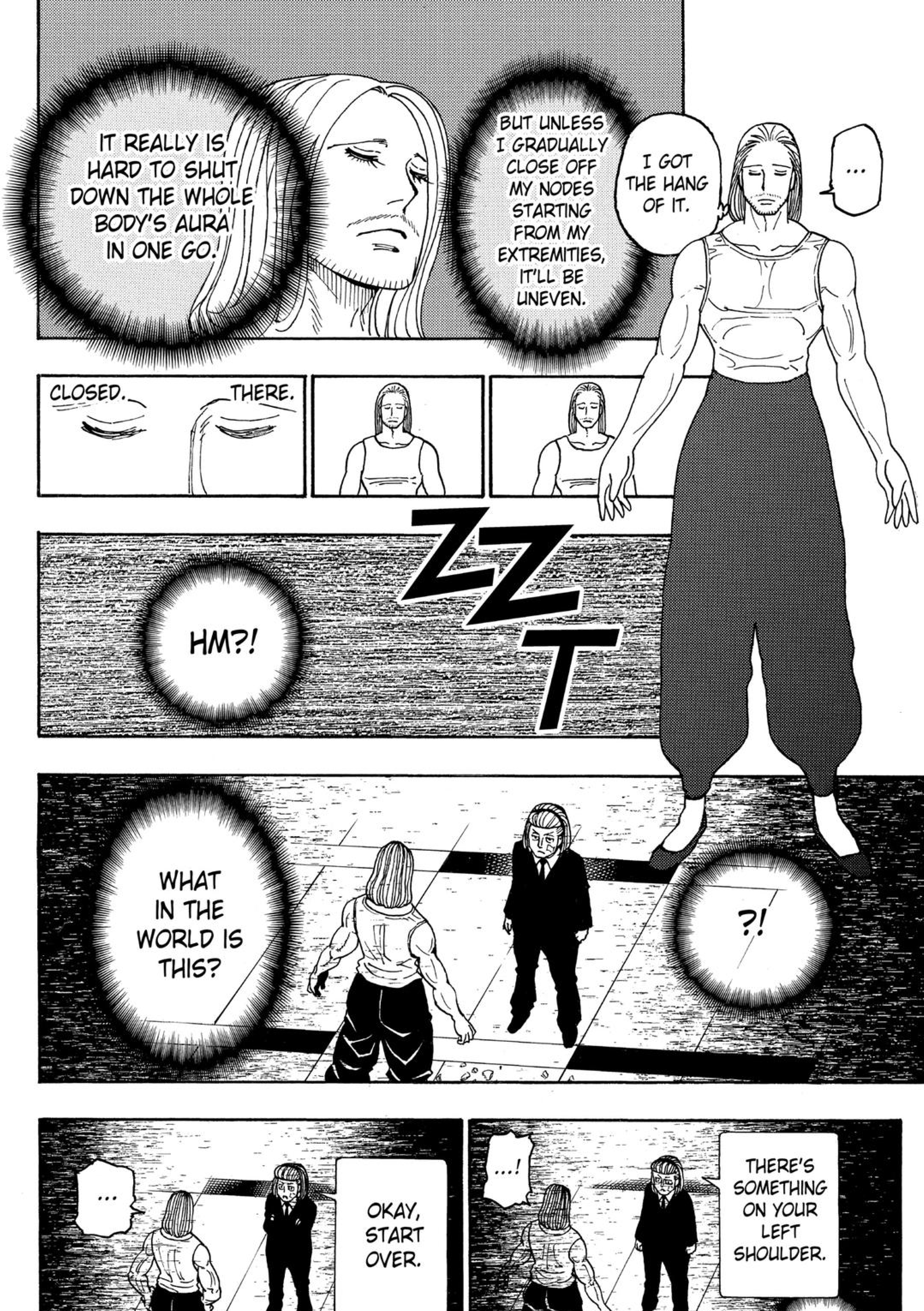

I PROMISED YOU'D LEARN NEN IN TWO WEEKS. WE WON'T BE DOING THE DIVINATION THE USUAL WAY BUT IN A WAY THAT REQUIRES OUR ASSISTANCE.
BILL AND I WILL ATTEND. THAT'S NON-NEGOTIABLE.
IF YOU TELL US THE CRITERIA IN ADVANCE...
...WHY DO YOU EVEN NEED TO BE THERE?
BASICALLY, YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT LET ME BE FRANK.
I SAID THE IMPACT IS SMALL, BUT THAT'S ONLY COMPARATIVELY. THERE IS STILL CONSIDERABLE RISK TO MYSELF.
I ASSERT THAT INFORMATION ON YOU IS ***PAYMENT...***
...AS JUST REWARDS!
FURTHERMORE, THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON FOR US, THE YOUNG PRINCE WOBLE'S BODYGUARDS, TO TEACH NEN! THAT IS TO BOOST THE LOWER-RANKED PRINCES' GUARDS WITH INFORMATION AND POWER, TO PROLONG THE STALEMATE.
CONSEQUENTLY, IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE FOR US TO BECOME A THREAT TO YOU!
IF YOU REMAIN UNCONVINCED...
...YOU CAN CALL IT QUITS HERE.

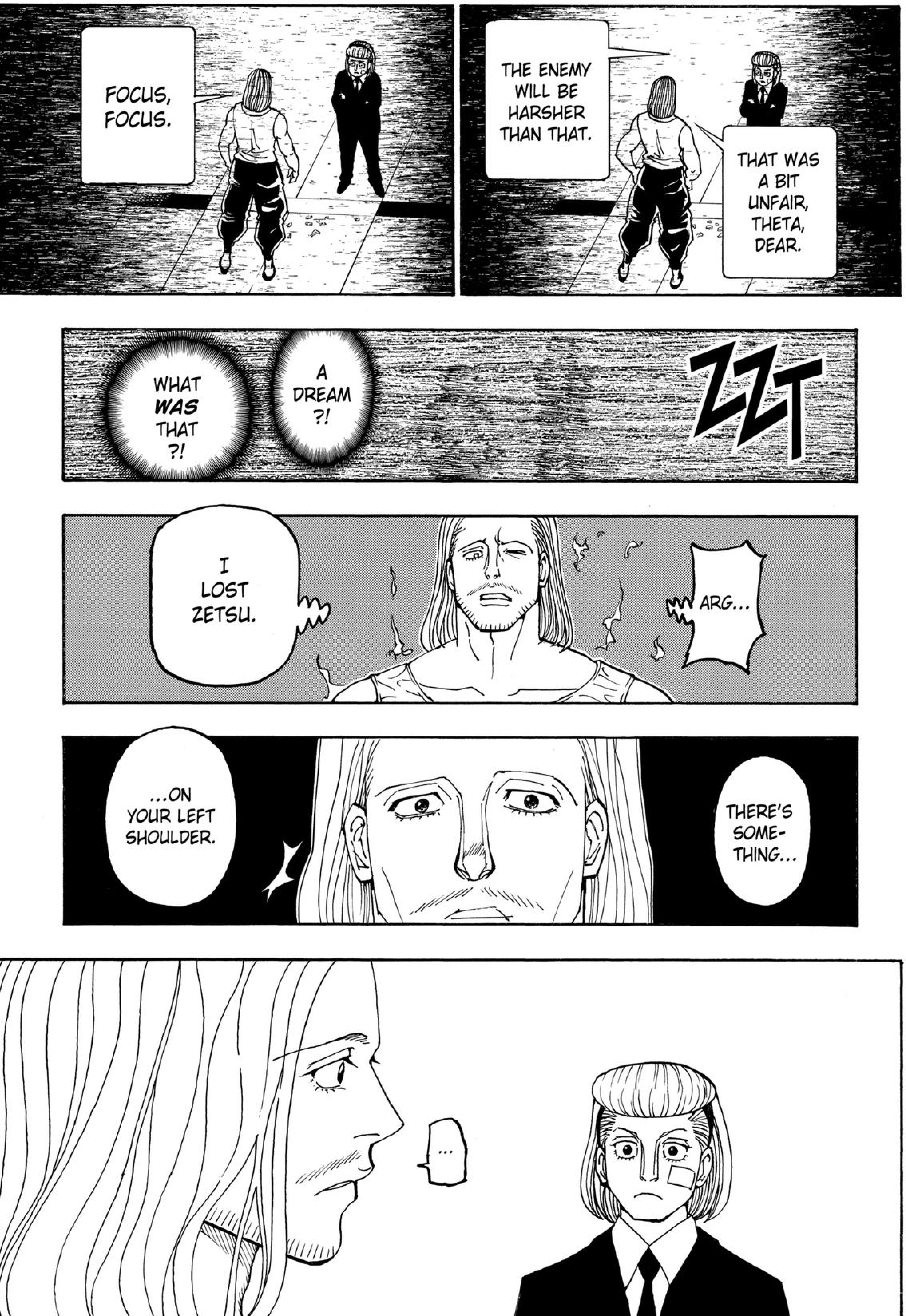

HE ADMITTED TO IT.
QUITE REFRESHING.
...
IT'S WHAT WE ALL KNEW.
STILL, IT'S SIGNIFICANT THAT WE IDENTIFIED HIM AS A SPECIALIST.
WANT TO SWAP OUT WITH RIHAN?
RIHAN'S ABILITY SHOULD BE USED TO ELIMINATE THE PRINCES' BEASTS.
AFTER EIGHTH PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ, HE MOVED ON TO MONITOR FIFTH RPINCE TUBEPPA, RIGHT?
IT SEEMS TO TAKE AFTER TUBEPPA'S TEMPERAMENT. IT'S BEING CAUTIOUS AND REFUSING TO SHOW ITSELF.
IF WE THINK OF IT AS RIHAN SUPPRESSING TUBEPPA'S BEAST, HE'S BEING PERFECTLY EFFECTIVE.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN EXCUSE FOR *YOURSELF*.
WHAT ABOUT THE ANALYSIS FOR 14TH PRINCE WOBLE'S BEAST? IT WAS DUE YESTERDAY.
IT'S NOT SHOWING ITSELF, SO THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
WE DON'T KNOW IF THE HOST IS TOO YOUNG, OR IF IT'S A COUNTER-ATTACKING TYPE, OR SOMETHING ELSE.
IT'S STILL THE FIRST WEEK.
IT'S NOT OUR MOVE YET TO MAKE.
THIS IS SO ENLIGHTENING.
A LESSON IN STRATEGIC PATIENCE.

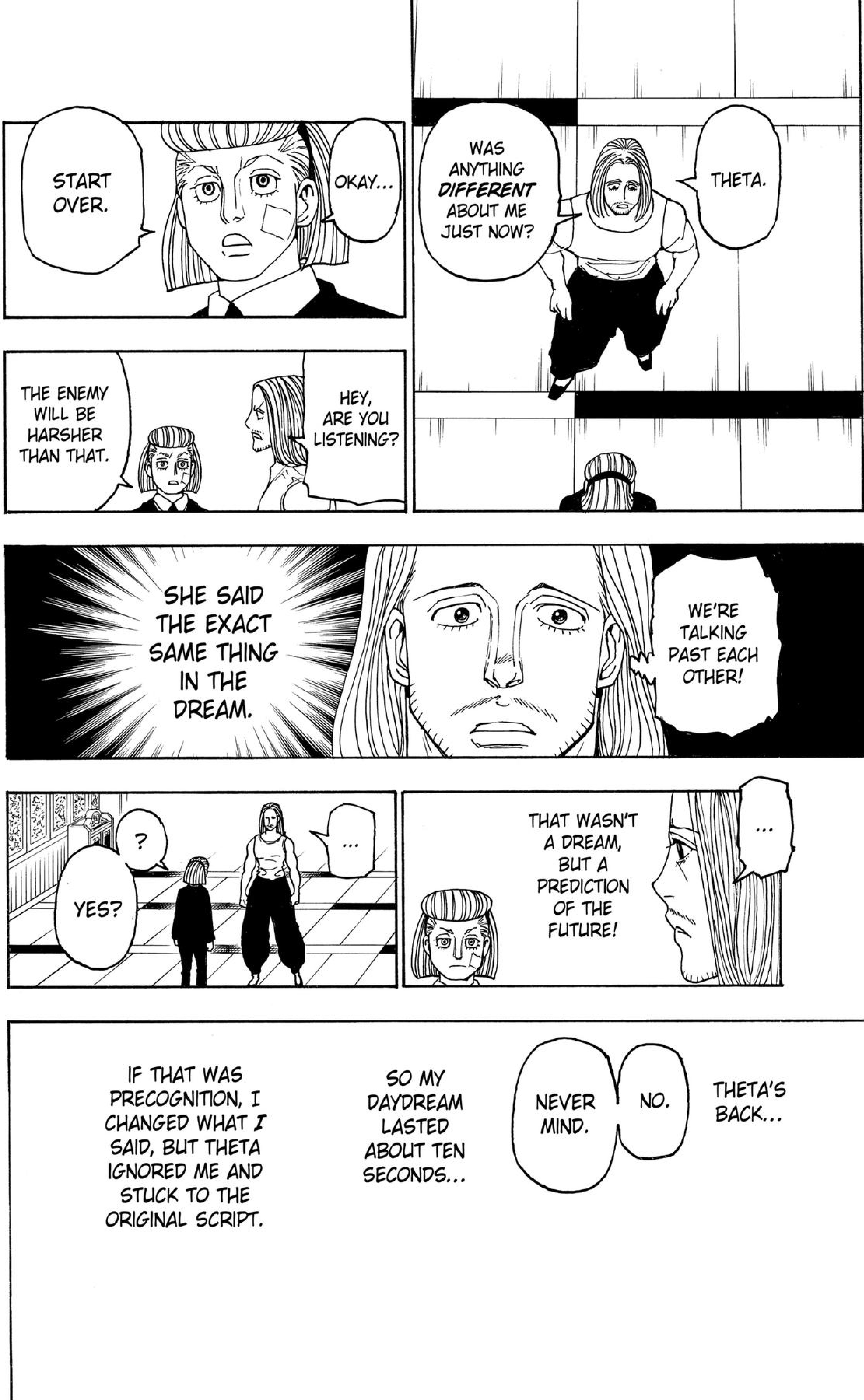

1004
WHAT?
YOU'RE APPLYING THE FOUR EXERCISES ALREADY?!
YEAH.
NOW I HAVE TO SHORTEN MY ZETSU RESPONSE TIME AS MUCH AS I CAN.
WHA...
I'M TRYING TO GET IT DOWN TO THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
IN ONLY ONE WEEK?!
BUT THIS MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME.
HE MASTERED THIS MUCH...
...NOT AWAKENED BY FORCE, BUT BY HIS OWN DEVICES?!
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
TIME ME FROM WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES TO WHEN I OPEN THEM.
ONCE IT'S LESS THAN A SECOND, THEN WE SPAR.
HE INSTINCTIVELY KNOWS HE NEEDS COMBAT TO GO ABOVE A CERTAIN POINT.
BUYING TIME WITH *HIM* WILL BE ROUGH.
ALL RIGHT.
BY THE WAY...
I'VE BEEN SURPRISED AT MY OWN CHANGE OF HEART.
A TWO-FACED WOMAN CAN BE PRETTY CUTE. ♡

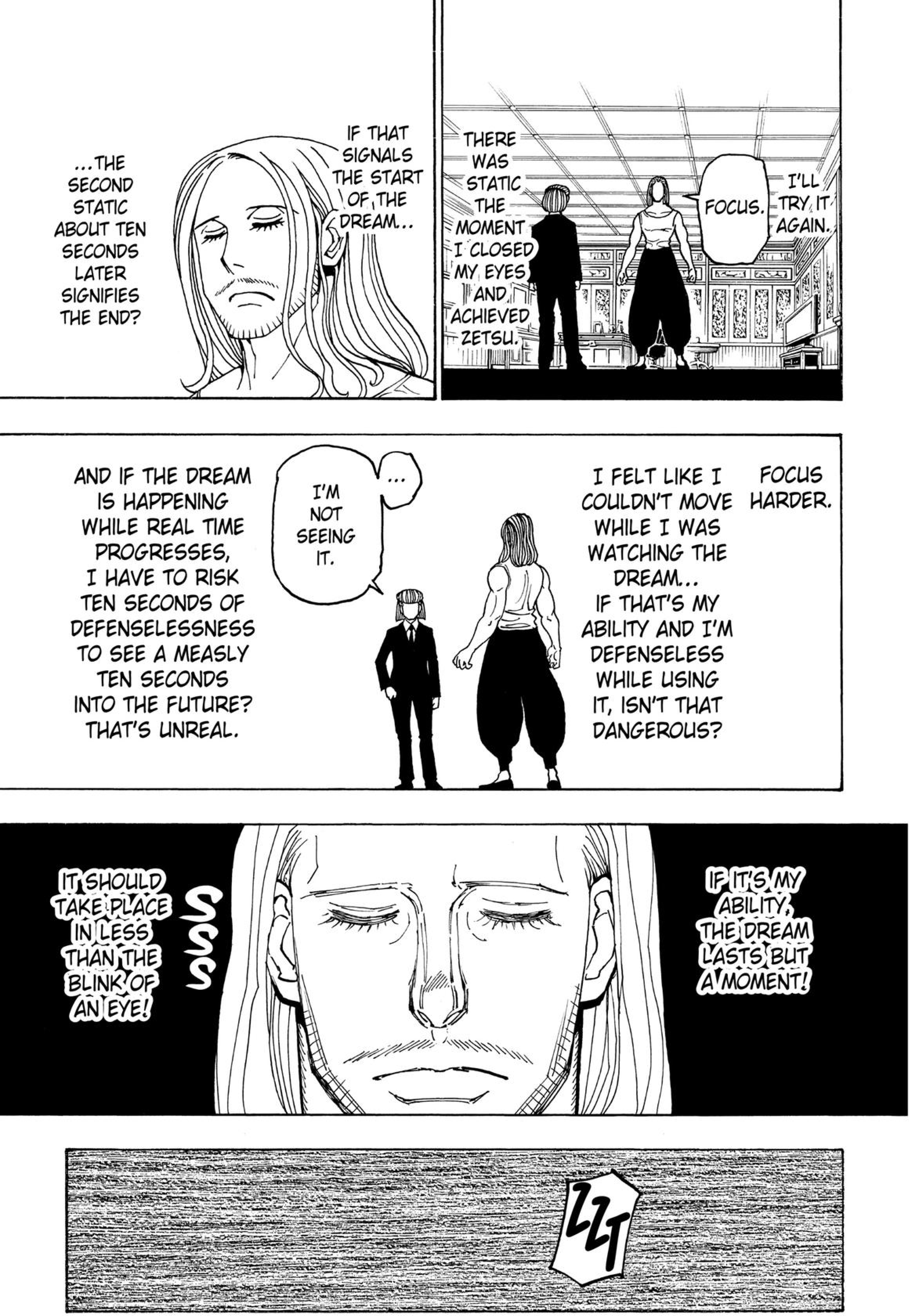
Chapter 387: Recreation

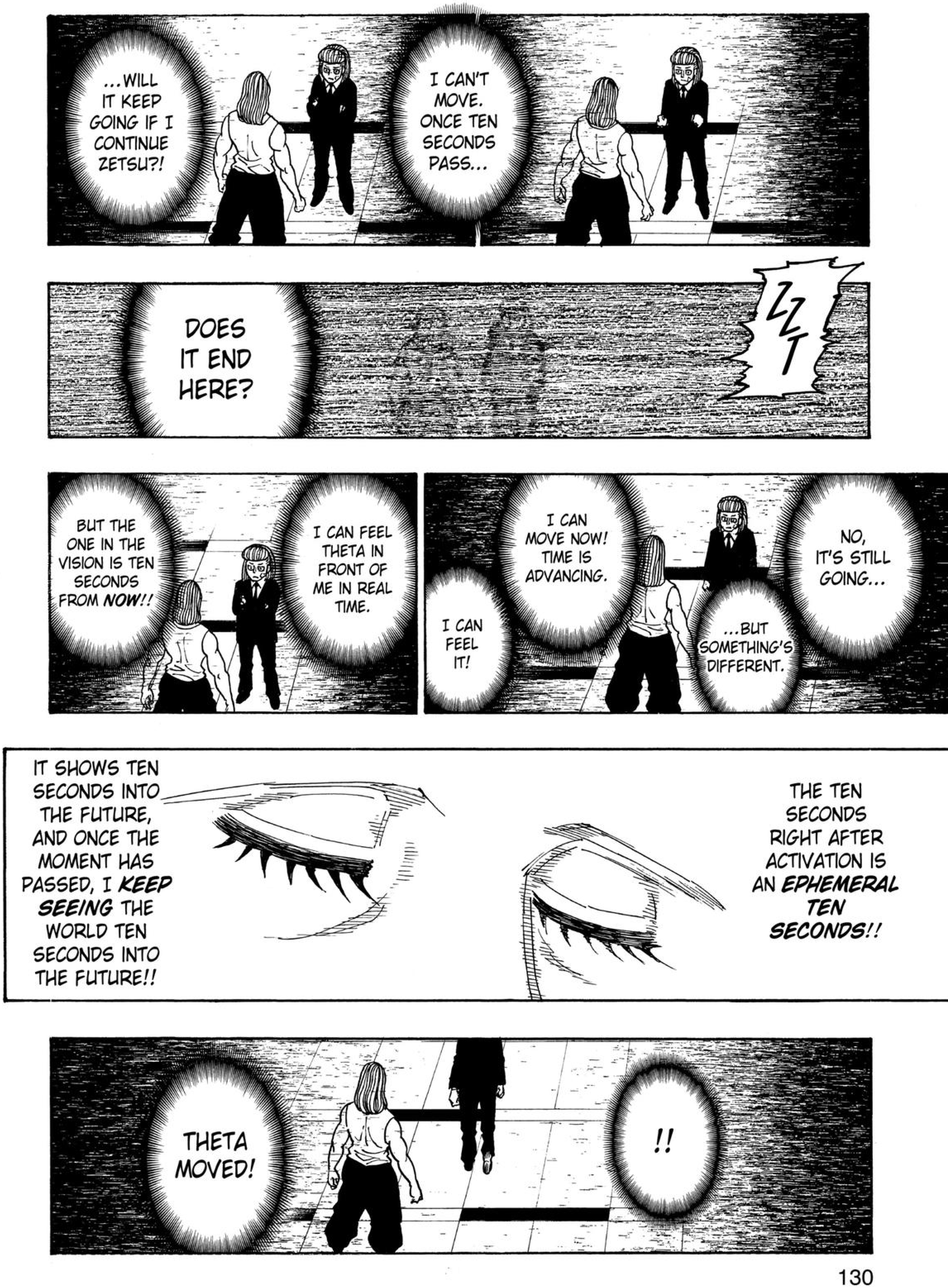

DAY 8 (SUNDAY) 7:35 P.M.
1004
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND FOCUS.
MAINTAIN YOUR ZETSU WHILE FOLLOWING MY INSTRUCTIONS AND ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS.
ZETSU WHILE LISTENING CAREFULLY IS PRETTY DIFFICULT.
CONTINUE YOUR ZETSU UNPERTURBED BY ALL SOUNDS, QUERIES, AND INCIDENTS.
DOING THIS FOR 60 MINUTES SHOULD FEEL LIKE A VERY LONG TIME.

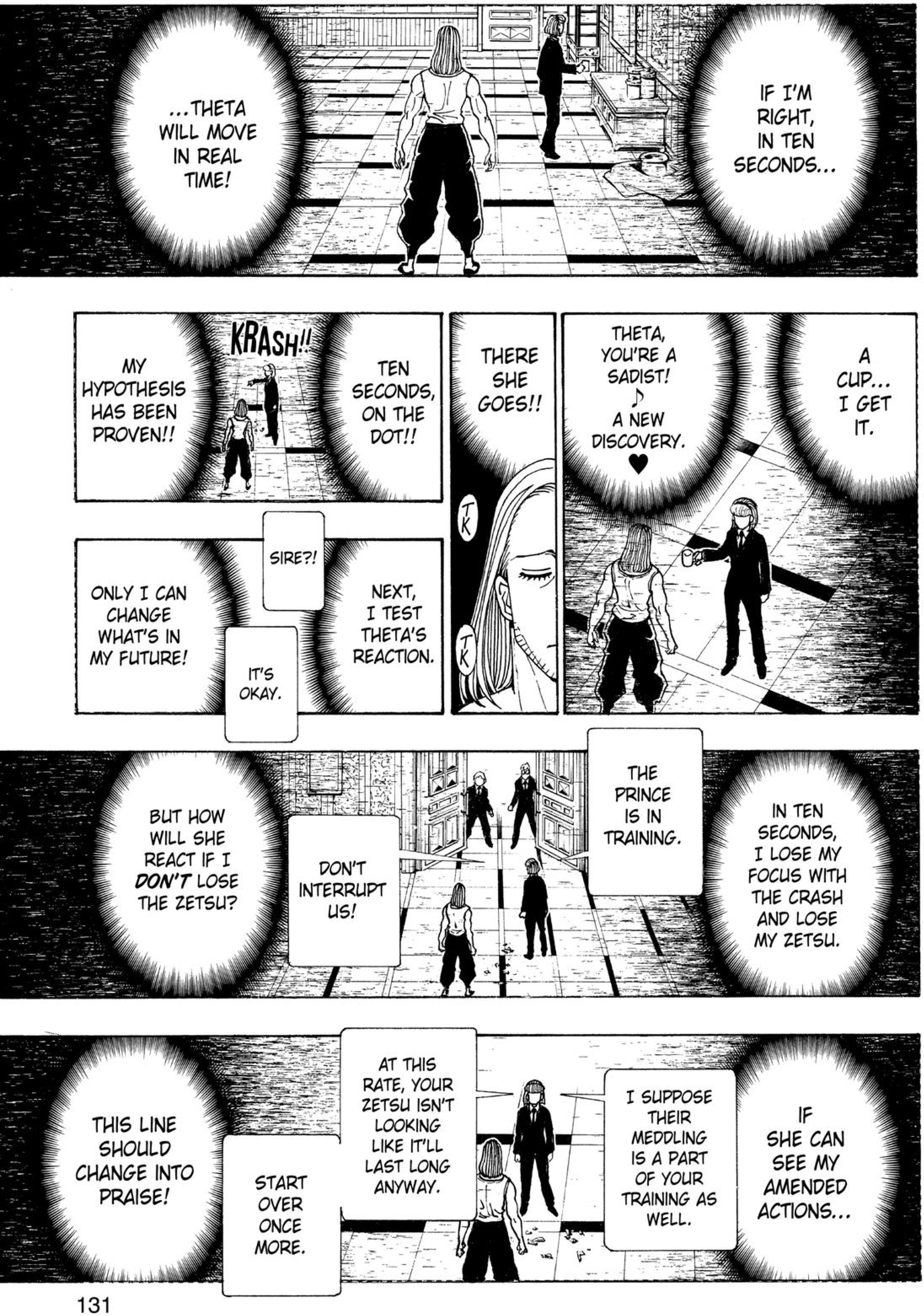

IT REALLY IS HARD TO SHUT DOWN THE WHOLE BODY'S AURA IN ONE GO.
BUT UNLESS I GRADUALLY CLOSE OFF MY NODES STARTING FROM MY EXTREMITIES, IT'LL BE UNEVEN.
I GOT THE HANG OF IT.
...
CLOSED.
THERE.
ZZZT
HM?!
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THIS?
?!
...
OKAY, START OVER.
...!
THERE'S SOMETHING ON YOUR LEFT SHOULDER.
...

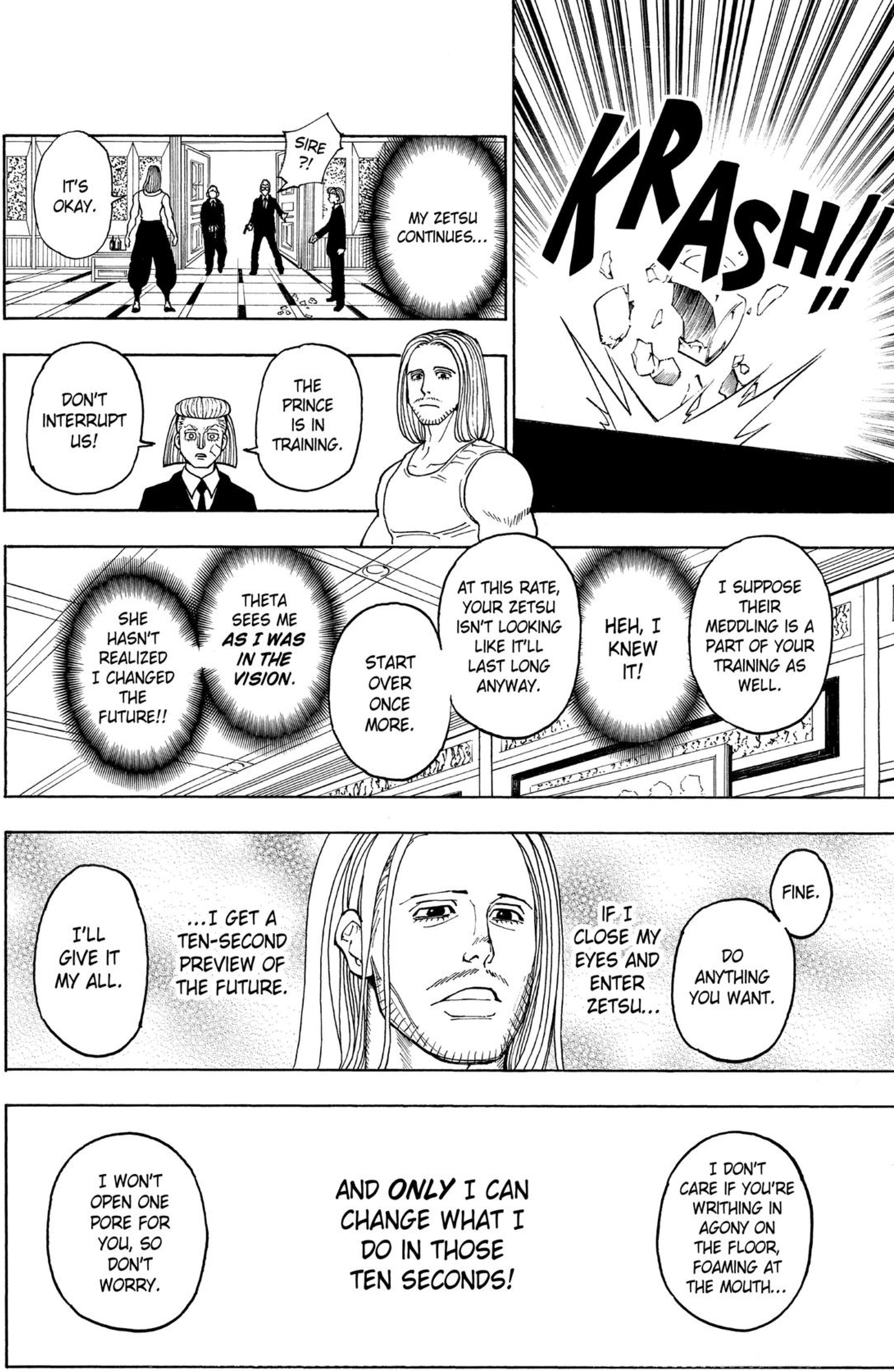

THAT WAS A BIT UNFAIR, THETA, DEAR.
THE ENEMY WILL BE HARSHER THAN THAT.
FOCUS, FOCUS.
ZZT
A DREAM?!
WHAT *WAS* THAT?!
ARG...
I LOST ZETSU.
THERE'S SOMETHING...
...ON YOUR LEFT SHOULDER.
...

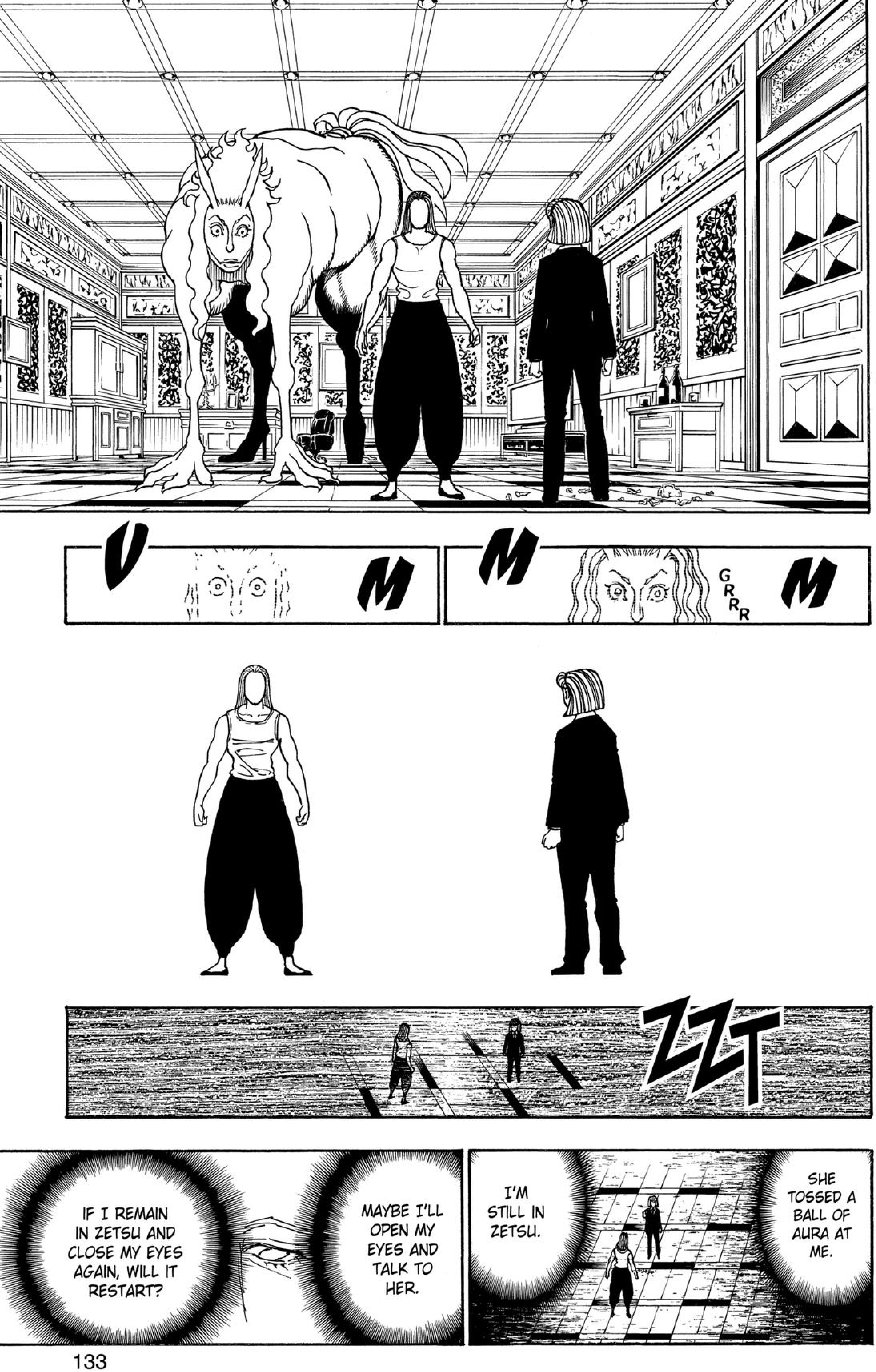

THETA.
WAS ANYTHING ***DIFFERENT*** ABOUT ME JUST NOW?
OKAY...
START OVER.
HEY, ARE YOU LISTENING?
THE ENEMY WILL BE HARSHER THAN THAT.
WE'RE TALKING PAST EACH OTHER!
SHE SAID THE EXACT SAME THING IN THE DREAM.
...
THAT WASN'T A DREAM, BUT A PREDICTION OF THE FUTURE!
...
?
YES?
THETA'S BACK...
NO.
NEVER MIND.
SO MY DAYDREAM LASTED ABOUT TEN SECONDS...
IF THAT WAS PRECOGNITION, I CHANGED WHAT *I* SAID, BUT THETA IGNORED ME AND STUCK TO THE ORIGINAL SCRIPT.

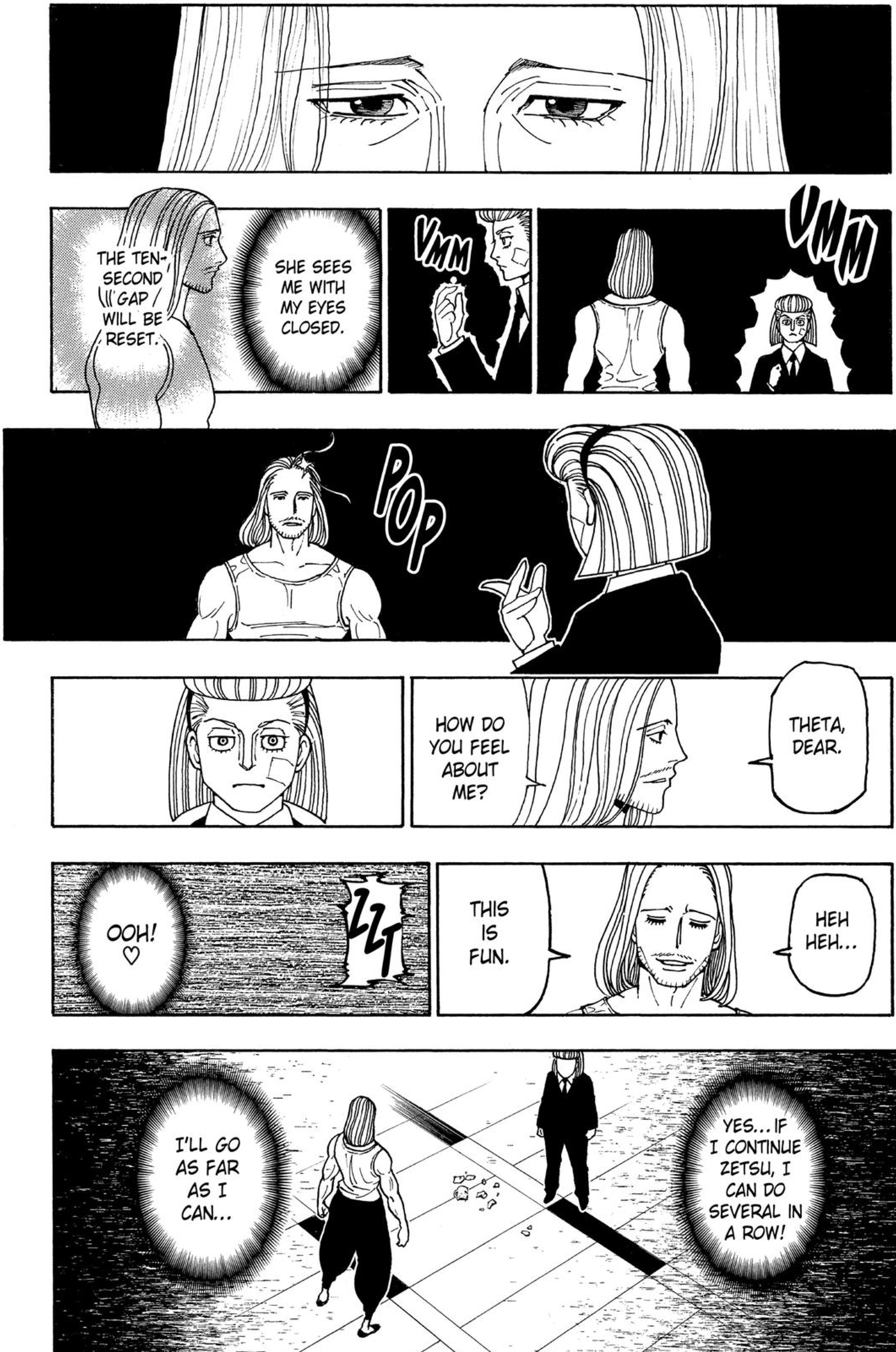

I'LL TRY IT AGAIN.
FOCUS.
THERE WAS STATIC THE MOMENT I CLOSED MY EYES AND ACHIEVED ZETSU.
IF THAT SIGNALS THE START OF THE DREAM...
...THE SECOND STATIC ABOUT TEN SECONDS LATER SIGNIFIES THE END?
FOCUS HARDER.
I FELT LIKE I COULDN'T MOVE WHILE I WAS WATCHING THE DREAM... IF THAT'S MY ABILITY AND I'M DEFENSELESS WHILE USING IT, ISN'T THAT DANGEROUS?
...
I'M NOT SEEING IT.
AND IF THE DREAM IS HAPPENING WHILE REAL TIME PROGRESSES, I HAVE TO RISK TEN SECONDS OF DEFENSELESSNESS TO SEE A MEASLY TEN SECONDS INTO THE FUTURE? THAT'S UNREAL.
IF IT'S MY ABILITY, THE DREAM LASTS BUT A MOMENT!
SSS
IT SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN LESS THAN THE BLINK OF AN EYE!
ZZT

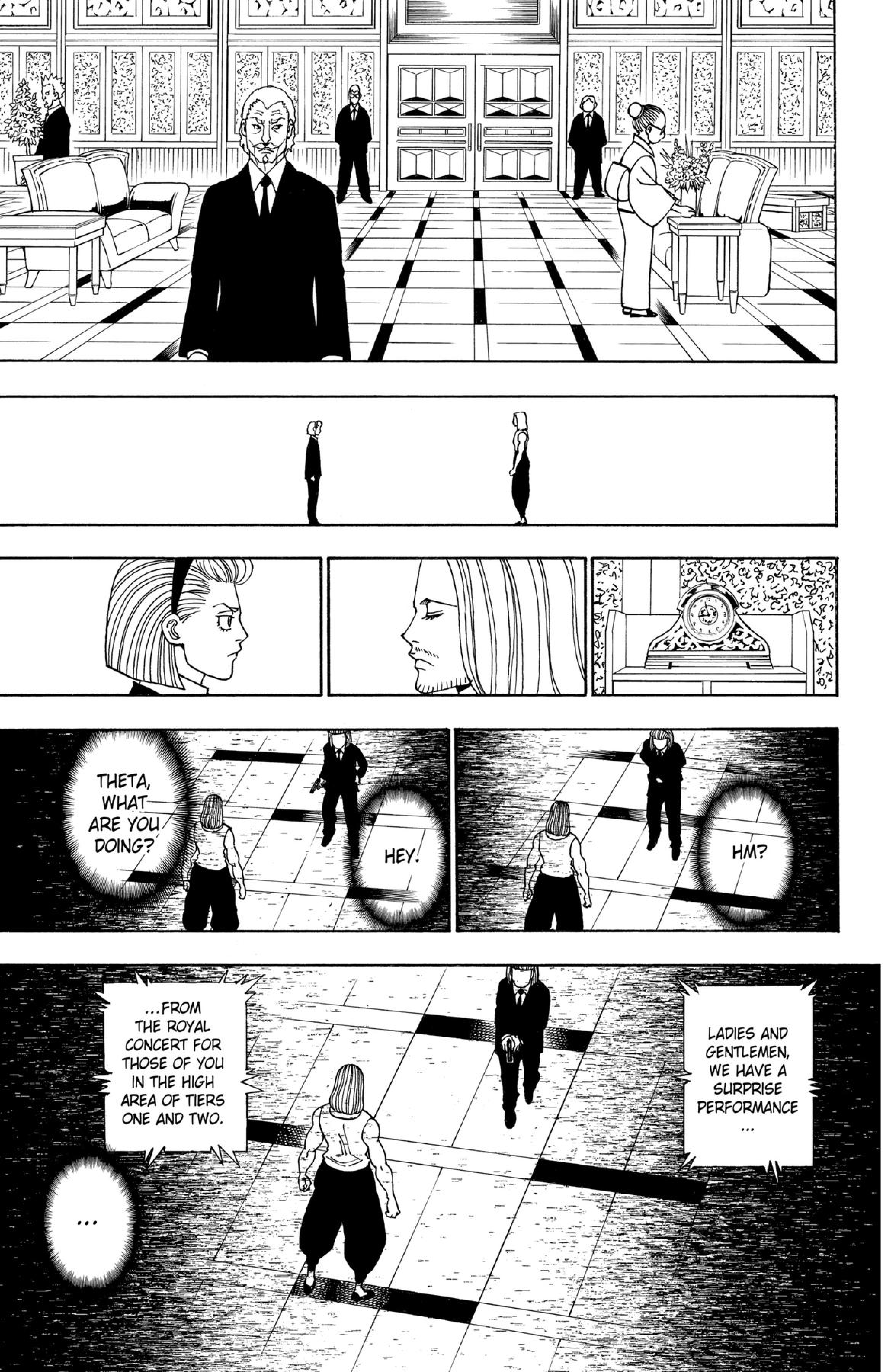

I CAN'T MOVE. ONCE TEN SECONDS PASS...
...WILL IT KEEP GOING IF I CONTINUE ZETSU?!
ZZT
DOES IT END HERE?
NO, IT'S STILL GOING...
...BUT SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT.
I CAN MOVE NOW! TIME IS ADVANCING.
I CAN FEEL IT!
I CAN FEEL THETA IN FRONT OF ME IN REAL TIME.
BUT THE ONE IN THE VISION IS TEN SECONDS FROM *NOW!!*
THE TEN SECONDS RIGHT AFTER ACTIVATION IS AN ***EPHEMERAL TEN SECONDS!!***
IT SHOWS TEN SECONDS INTO THE FUTURE, AND ONCE THE MOMENT HAS PASSED, I ***KEEP SEEING*** THE WORLD TEN SECONDS INTO THE FUTURE!!
!!
THETA MOVED!

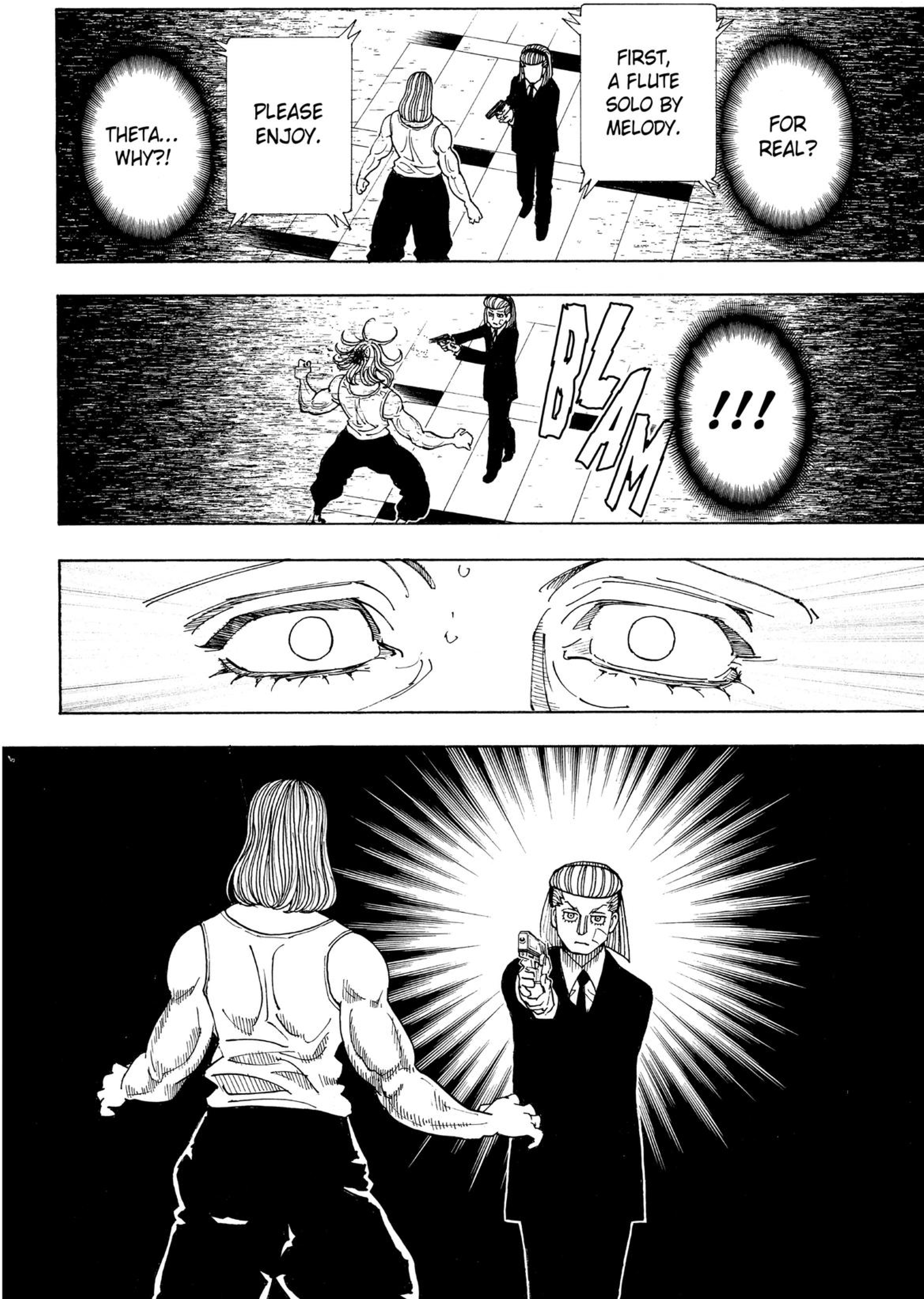

IF I'M RIGHT, IN TEN SECONDS...
...THETA WILL MOVE IN REAL TIME!
A CUP... I GET IT.
THETA, YOU'RE A SADIST! ♪ A NEW DISCOVERY. ♥
THERE SHE GOES!!
TK
TK
TEN SECONDS, ON THE DOT!!
KRASH!!
MY HYPOTHESIS HAS BEEN PROVEN!!
NEXT, I TEST THETA'S REACTION.
SIRE?!
IT'S OKAY.
ONLY I CAN CHANGE WHAT'S IN MY FUTURE!
IN TEN SECONDS, I LOSE MY FOCUS WITH THE CRASH AND LOSE MY ZETSU.
THE PRINCE IS IN TRAINING.
DON'T INTERRUPT US!
BUT HOW WILL SHE REACT IF I *DON'T* LOSE THE ZETSU?
IF SHE CAN SEE MY AMENDED ACTIONS...
I SUPPOSE THEIR MEDDLING IS A PART OF YOUR TRAINING AS WELL.
AT THIS RATE, YOUR ZETSU ISN'T LOOKING LIKE IT'LL LAST LONG ANYWAY.
START OVER ONCE MORE.
THIS LINE SHOULD CHANGE INTO PRAISE!

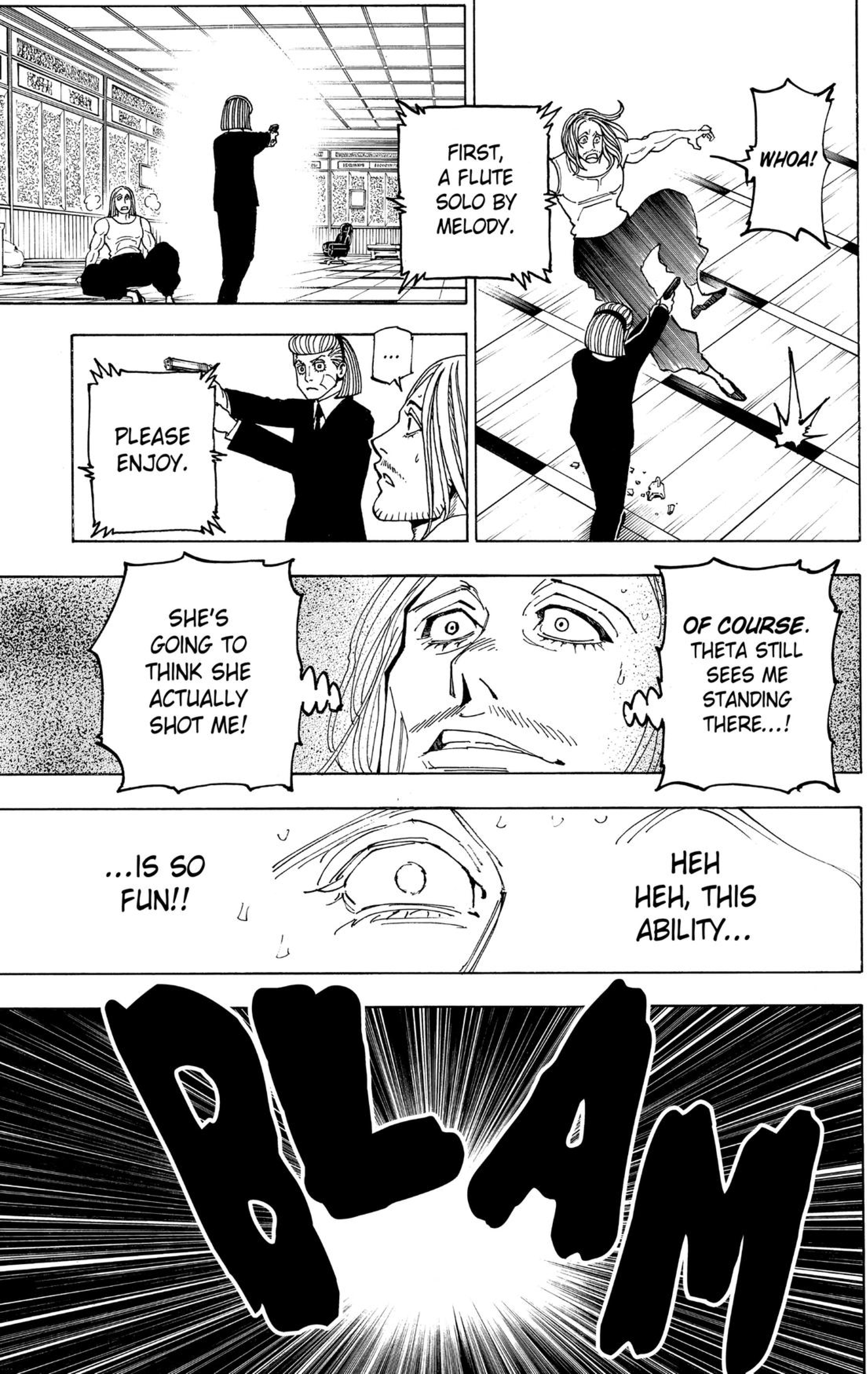

KRASH!!
MY ZETSU CONTINUES...
SIRE ?!
IT'S OKAY.
THE PRINCE IS IN TRAINING.
DON'T INTERRUPT US!
I SUPPOSE THEIR MEDDLING IS A PART OF YOUR TRAINING AS WELL.
HEH, I KNEW IT!
AT THIS RATE, YOUR ZETSU ISN'T LOOKING LIKE IT'LL LAST LONG ANYWAY.
START OVER ONCE MORE.
THETA SEES ME *AS I WAS IN THE VISION*.
SHE HASN'T REALIZED I CHANGED THE FUTURE!!
FINE.
DO ANYTHING YOU WANT.
IF I CLOSE MY EYES AND ENTER ZETSU...
...I GET A TEN-SECOND PREVIEW OF THE FUTURE.
I'LL GIVE IT MY ALL.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE WRITHING IN AGONY ON THE FLOOR, FOAMING AT THE MOUTH...
AND *ONLY* I CAN CHANGE WHAT I DO IN THOSE TEN SECONDS!
I WON'T OPEN ONE PORE FOR YOU, SO DON'T WORRY.

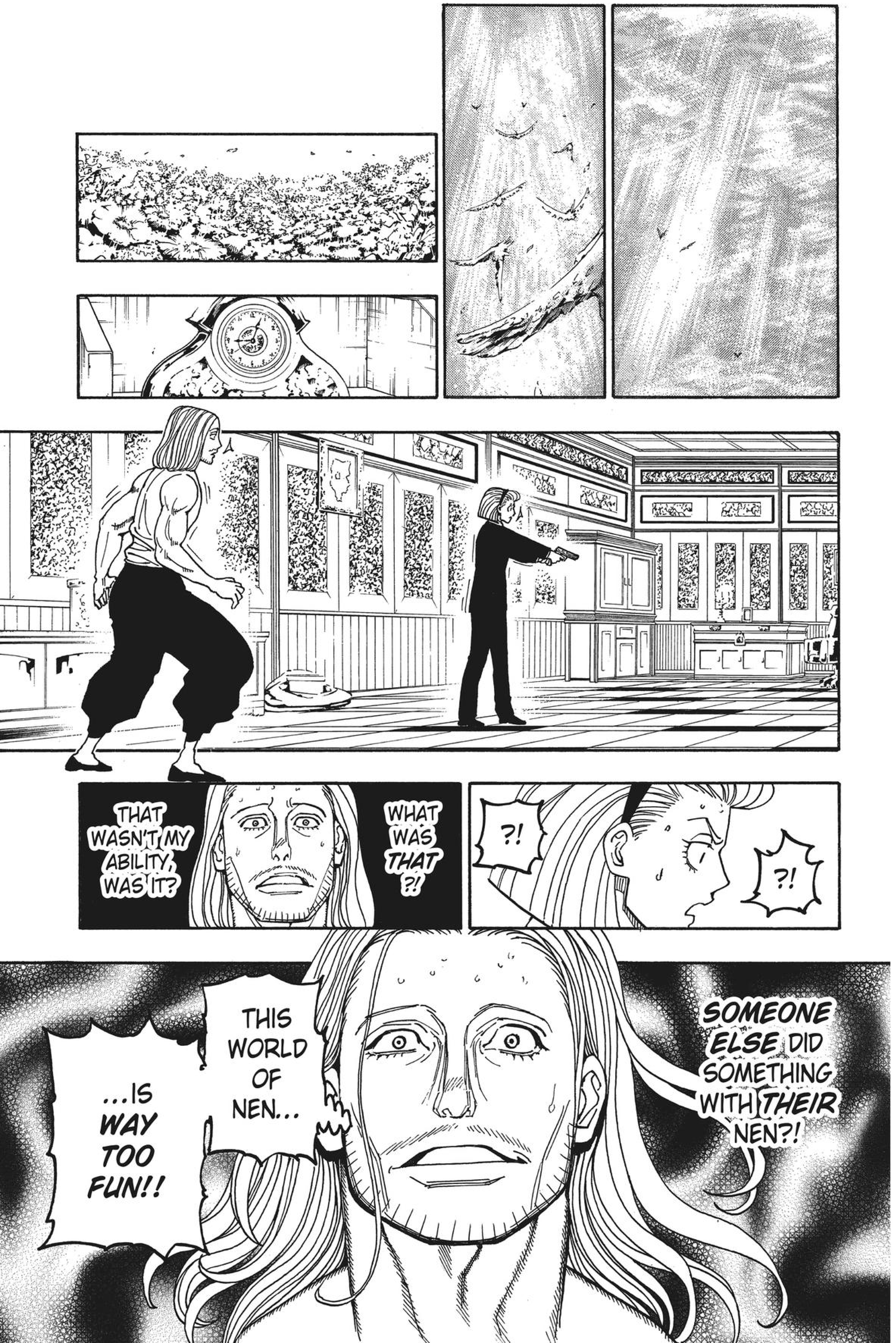

VMMM
GRRR
ZZT
IF I REMAIN IN ZETSU AND CLOSE MY EYES AGAIN, WILL IT RESTART?
MAYBE I'LL OPEN MY EYES AND TALK TO HER.
I'M STILL IN ZETSU.
SHE TOSSED A BALL OF AURA AT ME.

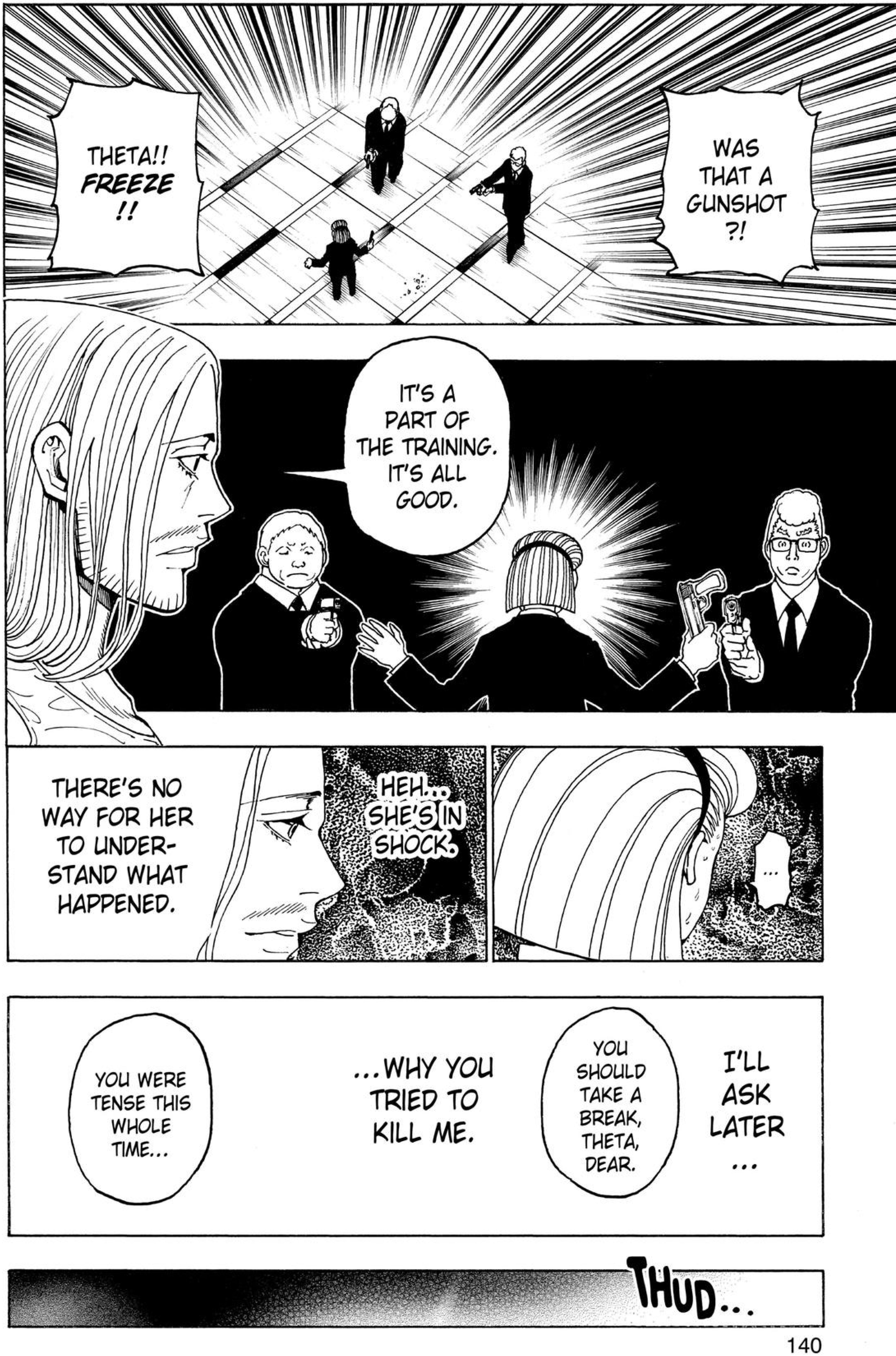

VMM
VMM
SHE SEES ME WITH MY EYES CLOSED.
THE TEN-SECOND GAP WILL BE RESET.
POP
THETA, DEAR.
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ME?
HEH HEH...
THIS IS FUN.
ZZT
OOH! ♡
YES... IF I CONTINUE ZETSU, I CAN DO SEVERAL IN A ROW!
I'LL GO AS FAR AS I CAN...

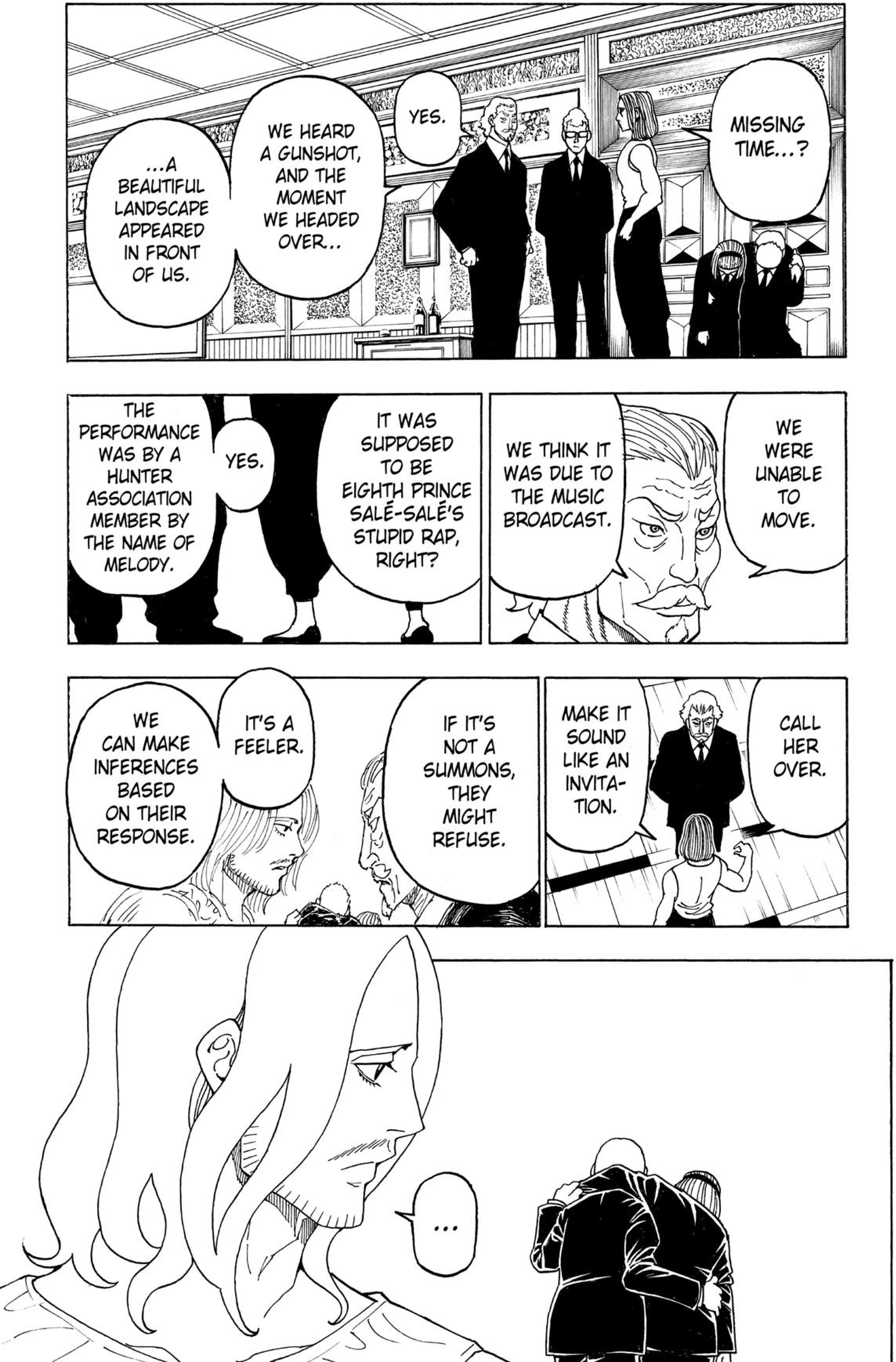

HM?
HEY.
THETA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WE HAVE A SURPRISE PERFORMANCE ...
...FROM THE ROYAL CONCERT FOR THOSE OF YOU IN THE HIGH AREA OF TIERS ONE AND TWO.
...

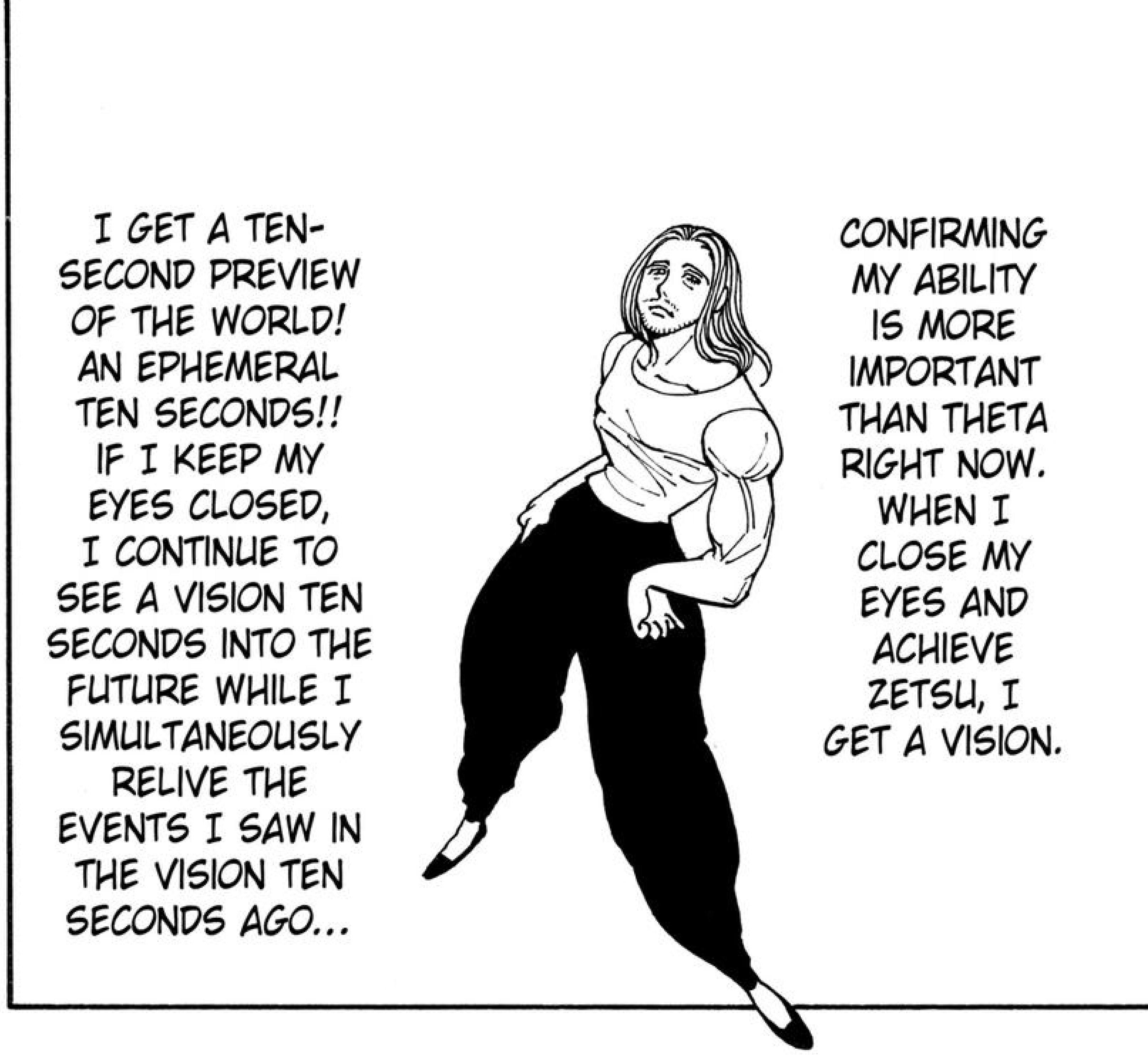

FOR REAL?
FIRST, A FLUTE SOLO BY MELODY.
PLEASE ENJOY.
THETA... WHY?!
!!!
BLAM

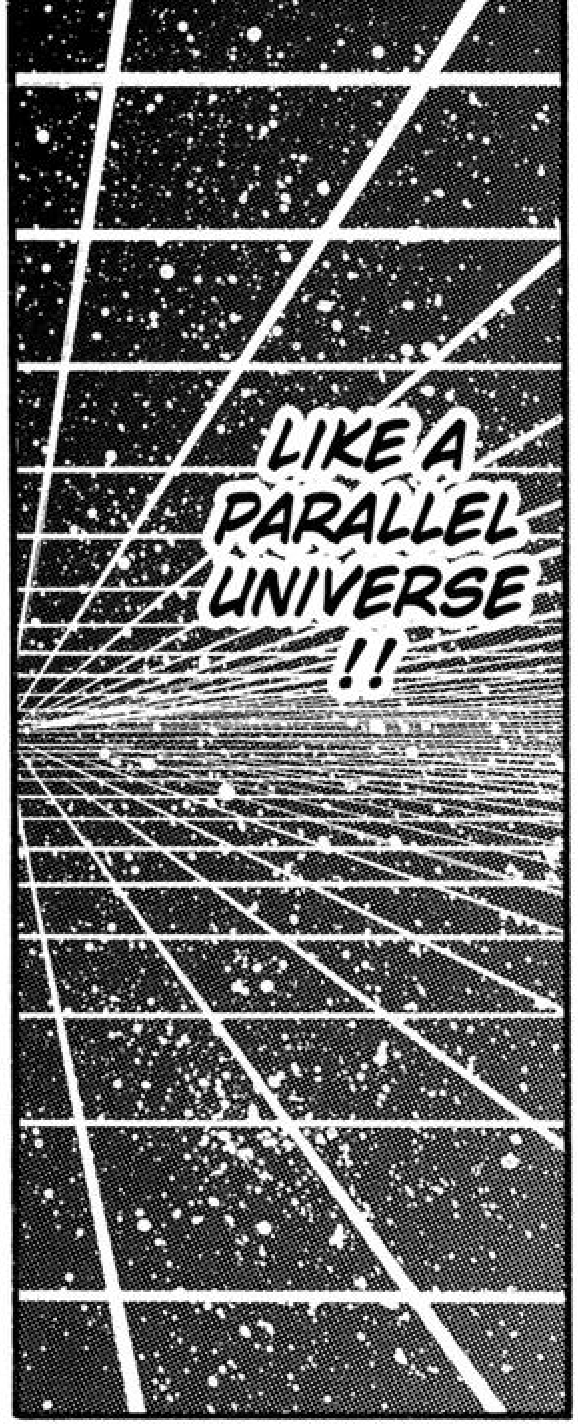

FIRST, A FLUTE SOLO BY MELODY.
...
PLEASE ENJOY.
WHOA!
OF COURSE. THETA STILL SEES ME STANDING THERE...!
SHE'S GOING TO THINK SHE ACTUALLY SHOT ME!
HEH HEH, THIS ABILITY...
...IS SO FUN!!
BLAM

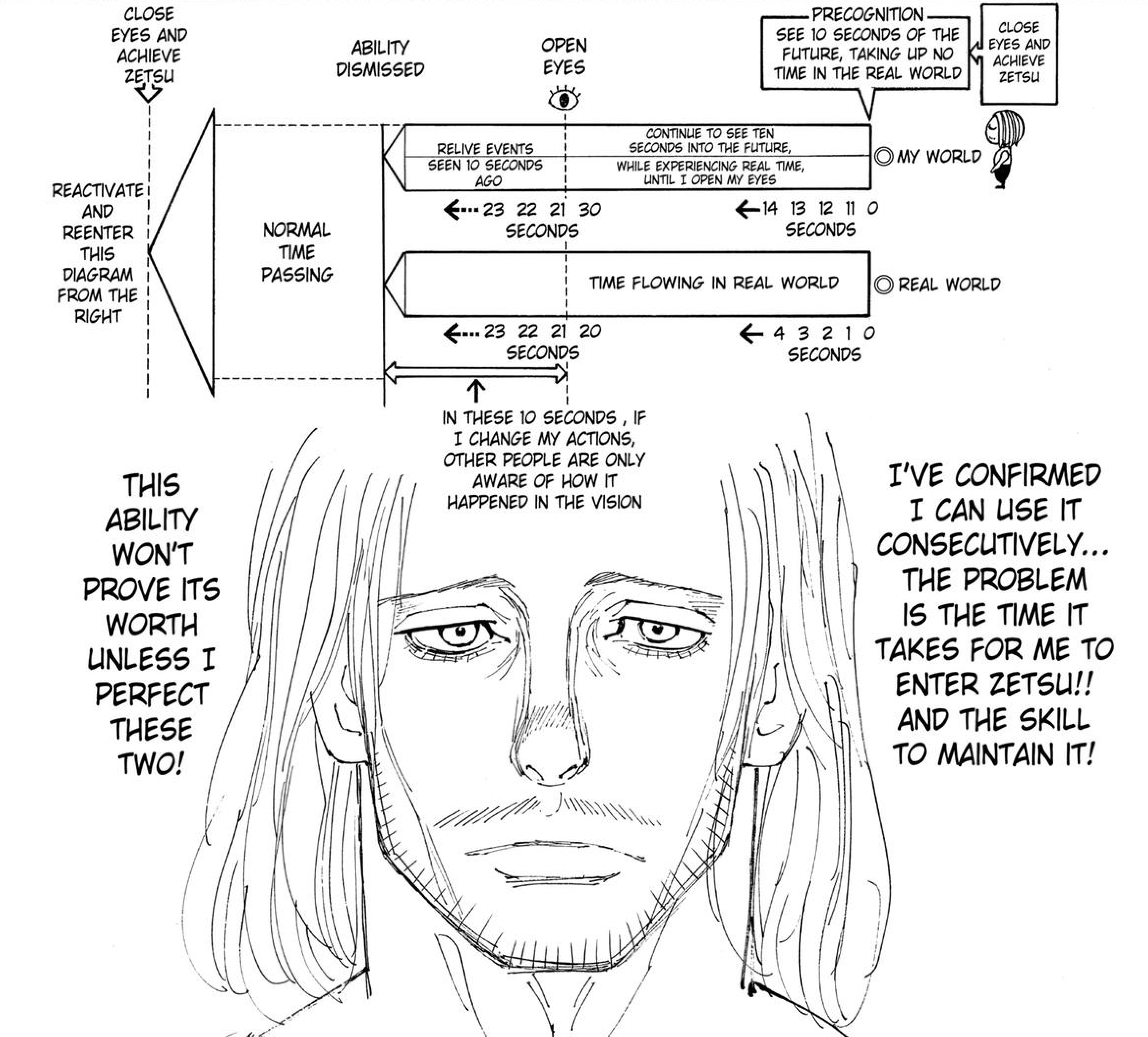

?!
?!
WHAT WAS *THAT* ?!
THAT WASN'T MY ABILITY, WAS IT?
SOMEONE ELSE DID SOMETHING WITH *THEIR* NEN?!
THIS WORLD OF NEN...
...IS *WAY TOO FUN!!*

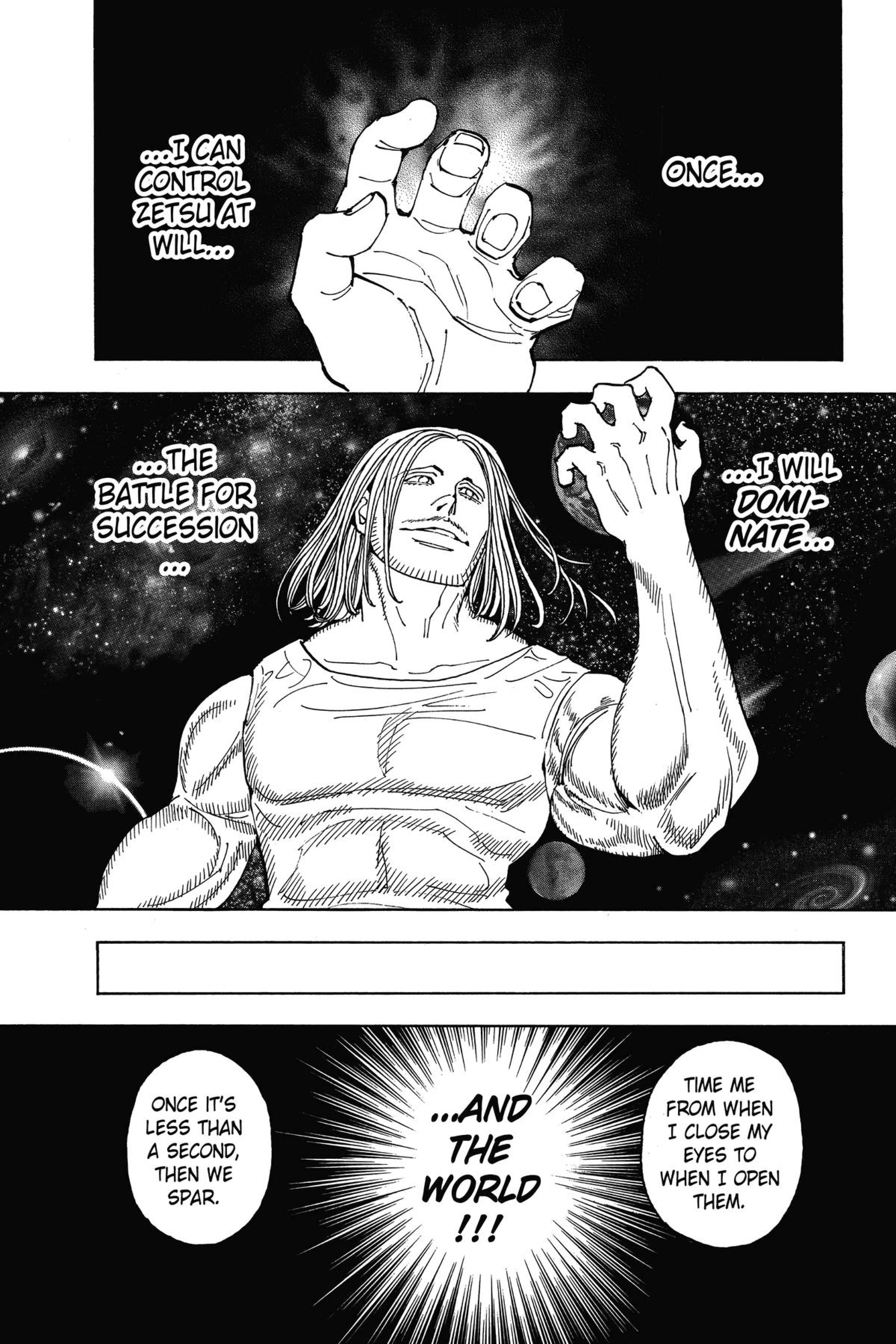

WAS THAT A GUNSHOT?!
THETA!! FREEZE!!
IT'S A PART OF THE TRAINING. IT'S ALL GOOD.
...
HEH... SHE'S IN SHOCK.
THERE'S NO WAY FOR HER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED.
I'LL ASK LATER...
YOU SHOULD TAKE A BREAK, THETA, DEAR.
...WHY YOU TRIED TO KILL ME.
YOU WERE TENSE THIS WHOLE TIME...
THUD...

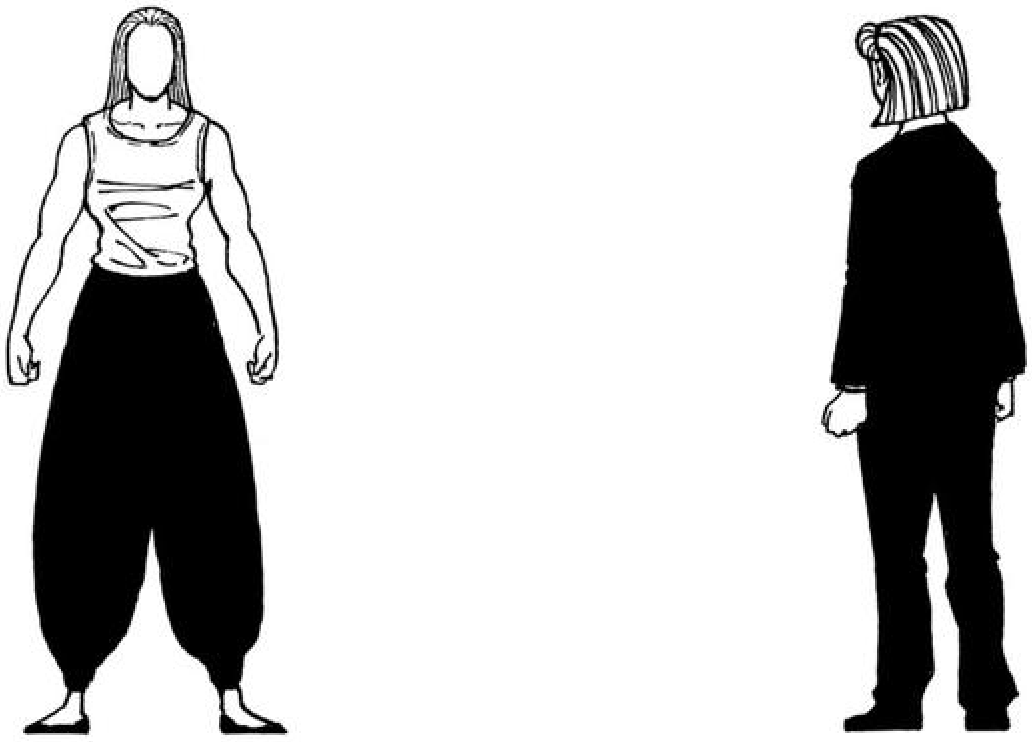

MISSING TIME...?
YES.
WE HEARD A GUNSHOT, AND THE MOMENT WE HEADED OVER...
...A BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE APPEARED IN FRONT OF US.
WE WERE UNABLE TO MOVE.
WE THINK IT WAS DUE TO THE MUSIC BROADCAST.
IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE EIGHTH PRINCE SALÉ-SALÉ'S STUPID RAP, RIGHT?
YES.
THE PERFORMANCE WAS BY A HUNTER ASSOCIATION MEMBER BY THE NAME OF MELODY.
CALL HER OVER.
MAKE IT SOUND LIKE AN INVITATION.
IF IT'S NOT A SUMMONS, THEY MIGHT REFUSE.
IT'S A FEELER.
WE CAN MAKE INFERENCES BASED ON THEIR RESPONSE.
...


CONFIRMING MY ABILITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THETA RIGHT NOW. WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES AND ACHIEVE ZETSU, I GET A VISION.
I GET A TEN-SECOND PREVIEW OF THE WORLD! AN EPHEMERAL TEN SECONDS!! IF I KEEP MY EYES CLOSED, I CONTINUE TO SEE A VISION TEN SECONDS INTO THE FUTURE WHILE I SIMULTANEOUSLY RELIVE THE EVENTS I SAW IN THE VISION TEN SECONDS AGO...

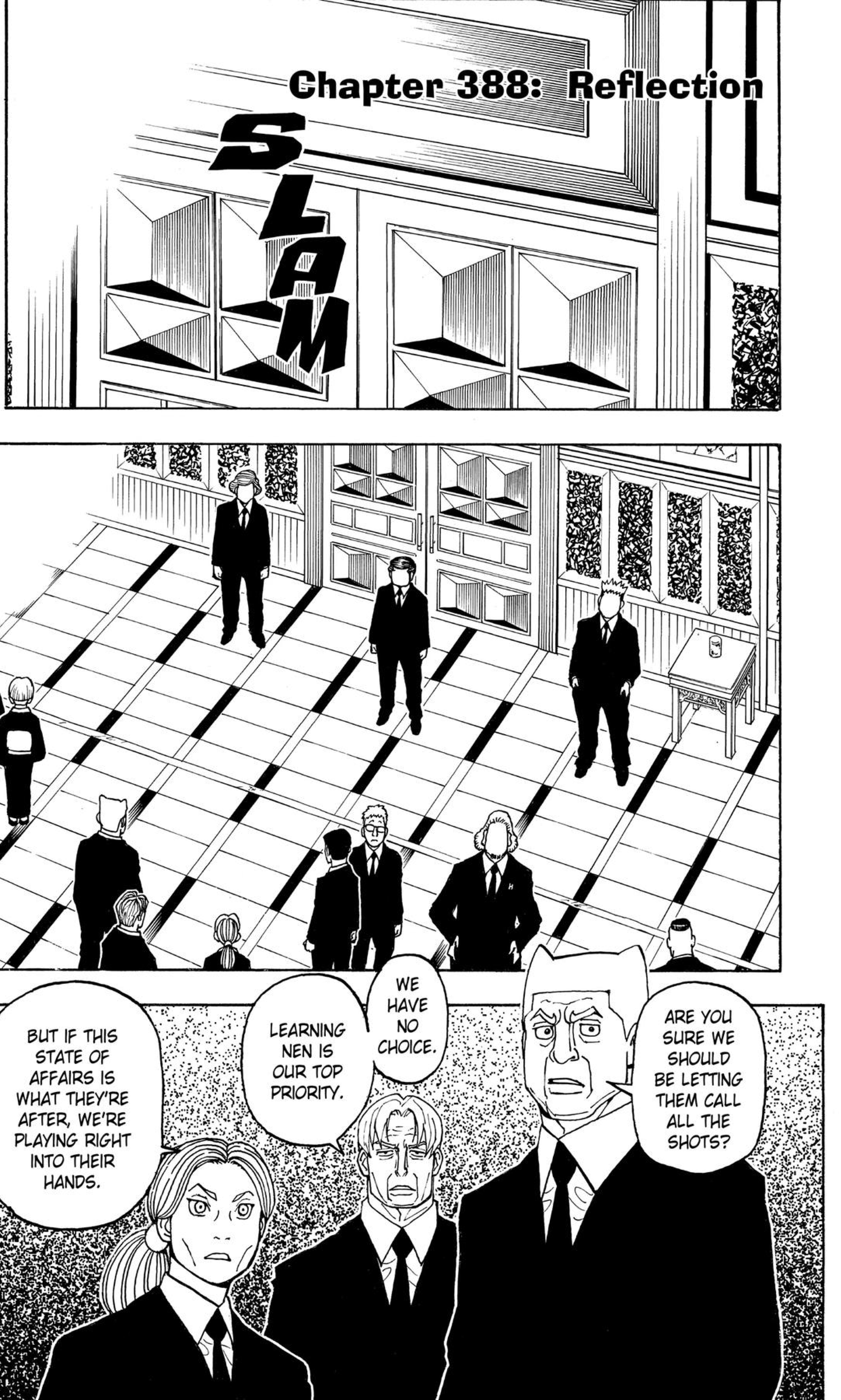

LIKE A PARALLEL UNIVERSE!!

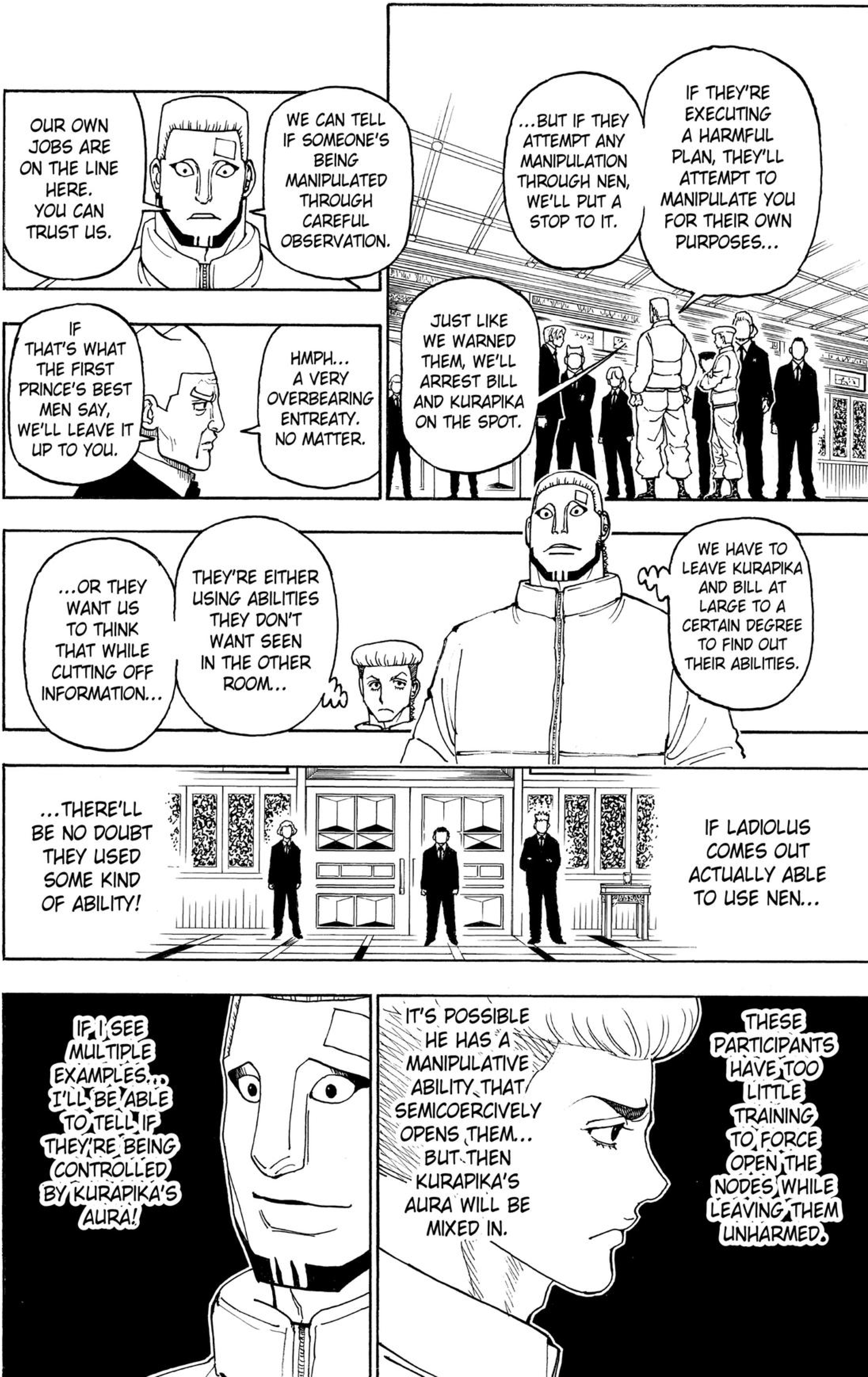

CLOSE EYES AND ACHIEVE ZETSU
PRECOGNITION
SEE 10 SECONDS OF THE FUTURE, TAKING UP NO TIME IN THE REAL WORLD
OPEN EYES
ABILITY DISMISSED
CLOSE EYES AND ACHIEVE ZETSU
CONTINUE TO SEE TEN SECONDS INTO THE FUTURE, WHILE EXPERIENCING REAL TIME, UNTIL I OPEN MY EYES
RELIVE EVENTS SEEN 10 SECONDS AGO
◎ MY WORLD
←14 13 12 11 0 SECONDS
←··· 23 22 21 30 SECONDS
NORMAL TIME PASSING
REACTIVATE AND REENTER THIS DIAGRAM FROM THE RIGHT
TIME FLOWING IN REAL WORLD
◎ REAL WORLD
← 4 3 2 1 0 SECONDS
←··· 23 22 21 20 SECONDS
IN THESE 10 SECONDS , IF I CHANGE MY ACTIONS, OTHER PEOPLE ARE ONLY AWARE OF HOW IT HAPPENED IN THE VISION
I'VE CONFIRMED I CAN USE IT CONSECUTIVELY... THE PROBLEM IS THE TIME IT TAKES FOR ME TO ENTER ZETSU!! AND THE SKILL TO MAINTAIN IT!
THIS ABILITY WON'T PROVE ITS WORTH UNLESS I PERFECT THESE TWO!

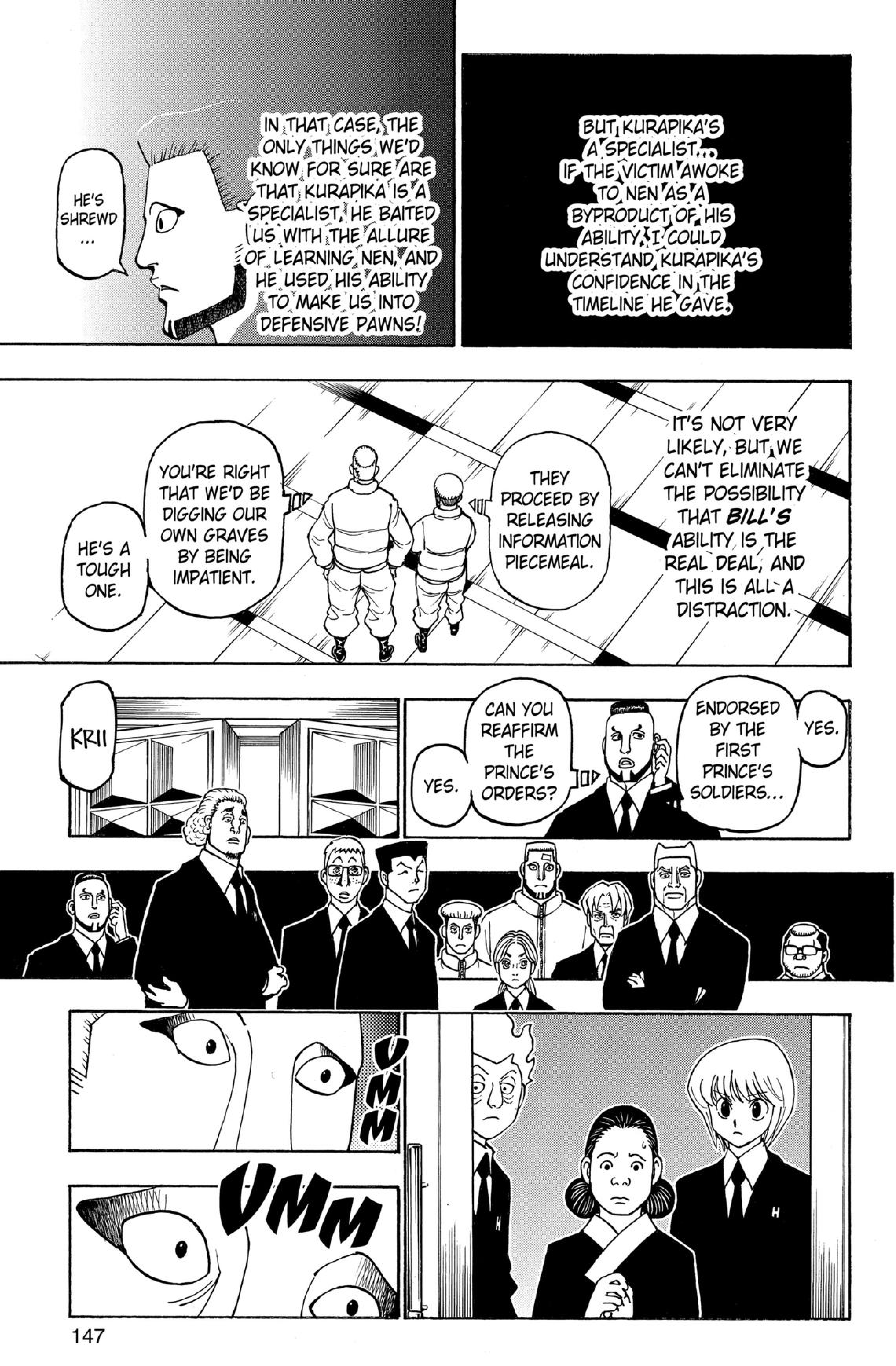

ONCE...
...I CAN CONTROL ZETSU AT WILL...
...I WILL DOMINATE...
...THE BATTLE FOR SUCCESSION...
...AND THE WORLD!!!
TIME ME FROM WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES TO WHEN I OPEN THEM.
ONCE IT'S LESS THAN A SECOND, THEN WE SPAR.

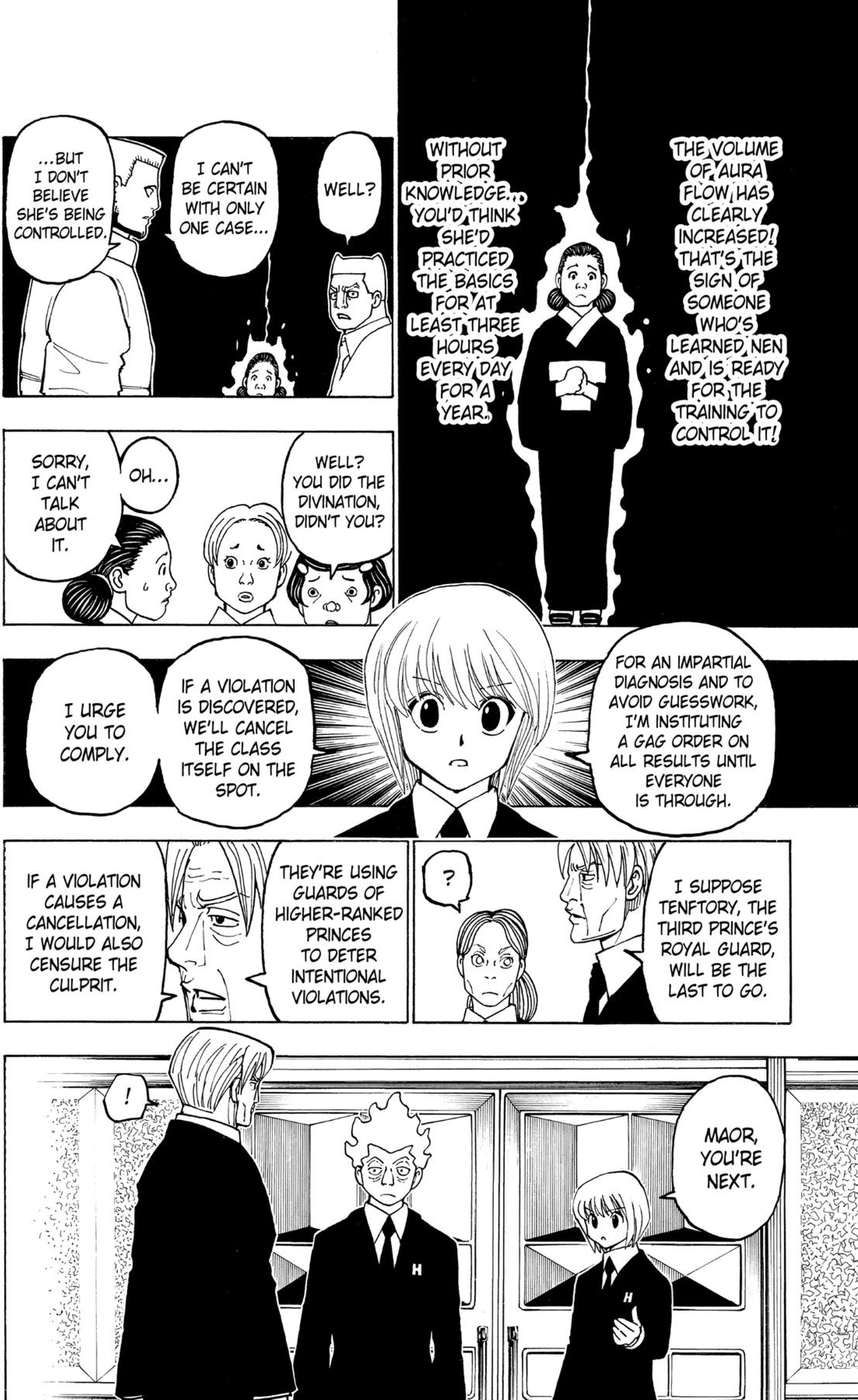


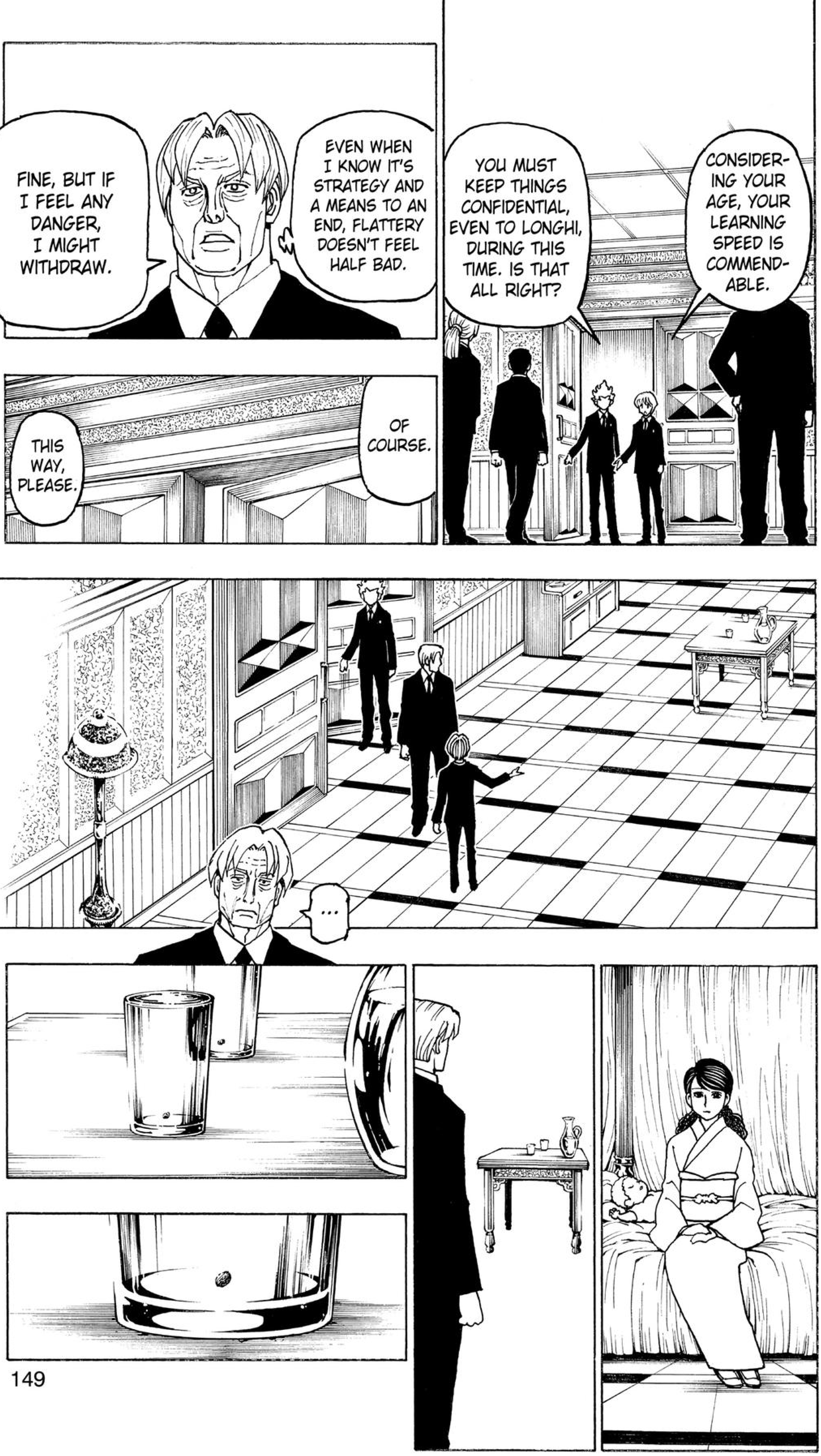
Chapter 388: Reflection

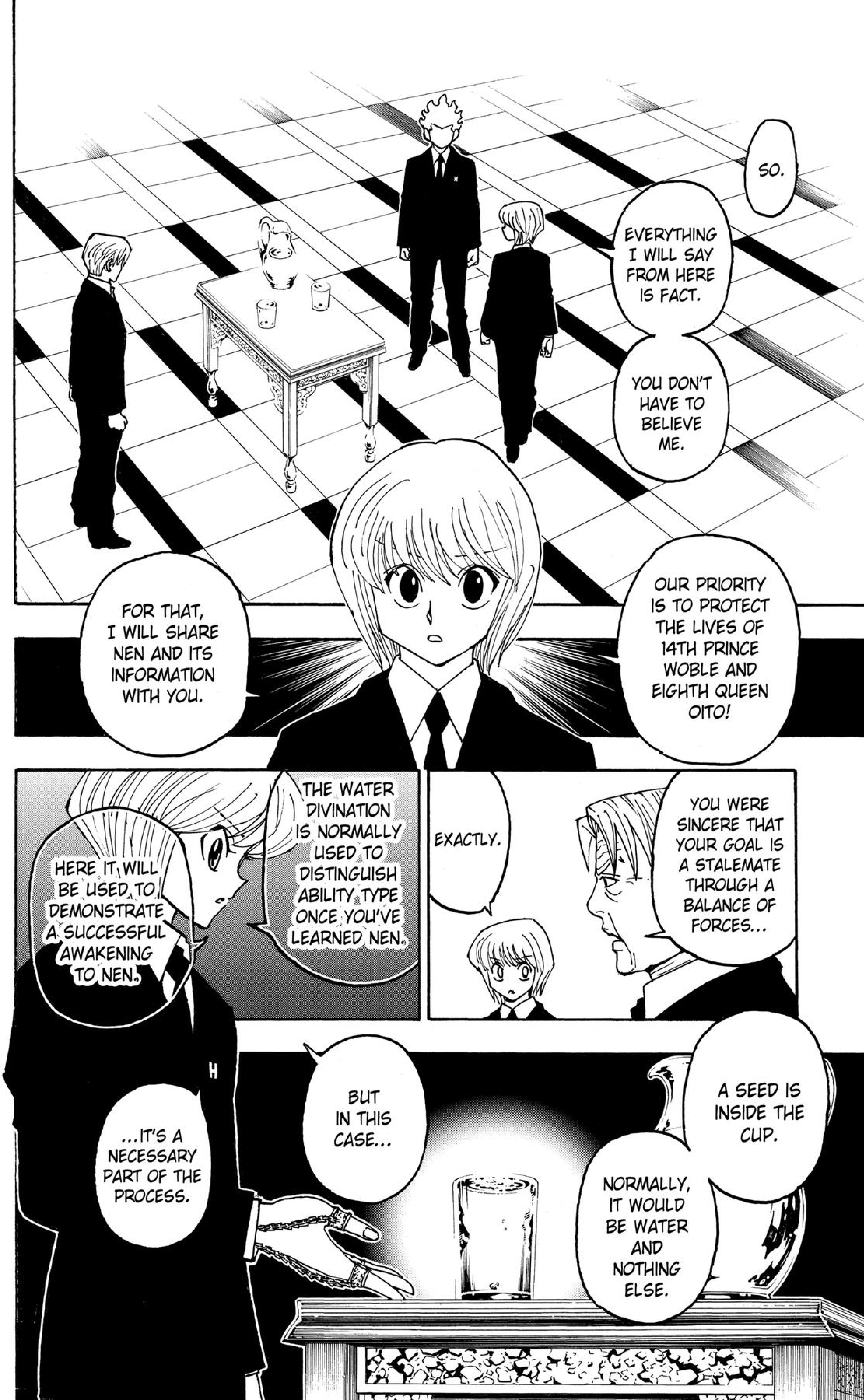

SLAM
ARE YOU SURE WE SHOULD BE LETTING THEM CALL ALL THE SHOTS?
WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
LEARNING NEN IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.
BUT IF THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS IS WHAT THEY'RE AFTER, WE'RE PLAYING RIGHT INTO THEIR HANDS.

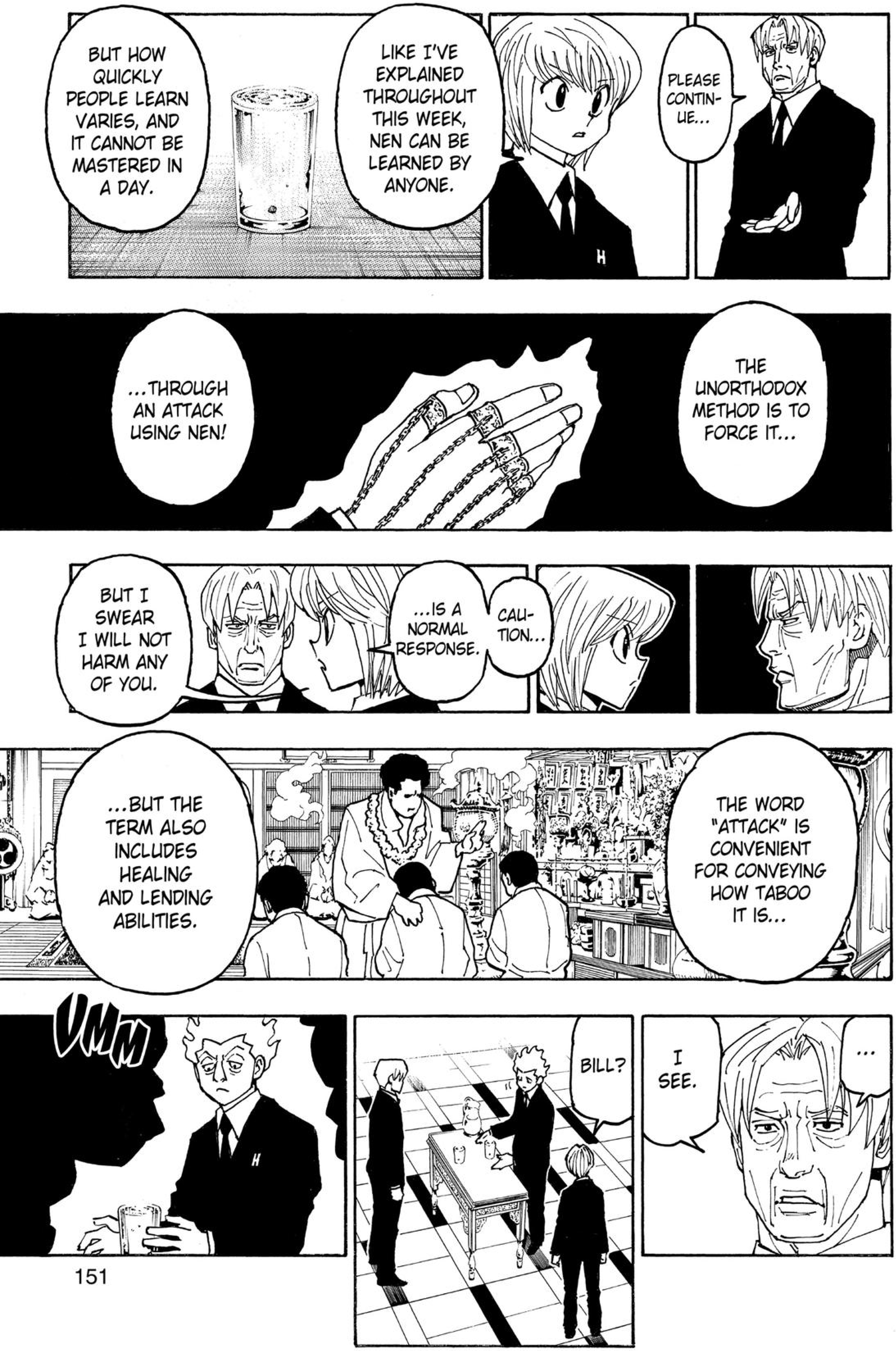

IF THEY'RE EXECUTING A HARMFUL PLAN, THEY'LL ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE YOU FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES...
...BUT IF THEY ATTEMPT ANY MANIPULATION THROUGH NEN, WE'LL PUT A STOP TO IT.
JUST LIKE WE WARNED THEM, WE'LL ARREST BILL AND KURAPIKA ON THE SPOT.
WE CAN TELL IF SOMEONE'S BEING MANIPULATED THROUGH CAREFUL OBSERVATION.
OUR OWN JOBS ARE ON THE LINE HERE. YOU CAN TRUST US.
HMPH... A VERY OVERBEARING ENTREATY. NO MATTER.
IF THAT'S WHAT THE FIRST PRINCE'S BEST MEN SAY, WE'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU.
WE HAVE TO LEAVE KURAPIKA AND BILL AT LARGE TO A CERTAIN DEGREE TO FIND OUT THEIR ABILITIES.
THEY'RE EITHER USING ABILITIES THEY DON'T WANT SEEN IN THE OTHER ROOM...
...OR THEY WANT US TO THINK THAT WHILE CUTTING OFF INFORMATION...
IF LADIOLUS COMES OUT ACTUALLY ABLE TO USE NEN...
...THERE'LL BE NO DOUBT THEY USED SOME KIND OF ABILITY!
THESE PARTICIPANTS HAVE TOO LITTLE TRAINING TO FORCE OPEN THE NODES WHILE LEAVING THEM UNHARMED.
IT'S POSSIBLE HE HAS A MANIPULATIVE ABILITY THAT SEMICOERCIVELY OPENS THEM... BUT THEN KURAPIKA'S AURA WILL BE MIXED IN.
IF I SEE MULTIPLE EXAMPLES... I'LL BE ABLE TO TELL IF THEY'RE BEING CONTROLLED BY KURAPIKA'S AURA!

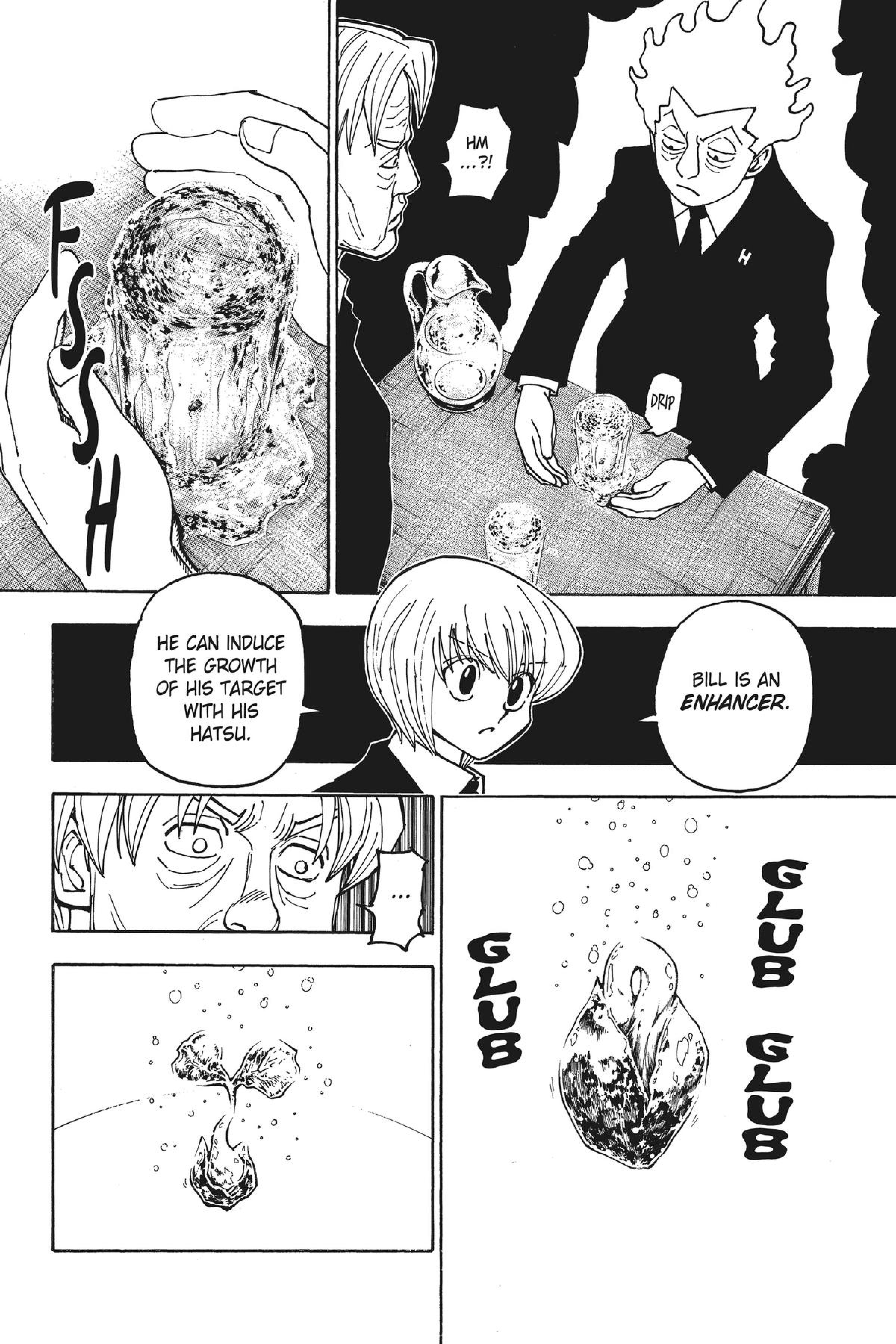

BUT KURAPIKA'S A SPECIALIST... IF THE VICTIM AWOKE TO NEN AS A BYPRODUCT OF HIS ABILITY, I COULD UNDERSTAND KURAPIKA'S CONFIDENCE IN THE TIMELINE HE GAVE.
IN THAT CASE, THE ONLY THINGS WE'D KNOW FOR SURE ARE THAT KURAPIKA IS A SPECIALIST, HE BAITED US WITH THE ALLURE OF LEARNING NEN, AND HE USED HIS ABILITY TO MAKE US INTO DEFENSIVE PAWNS!
HE'S SHREWD...
IT'S NOT VERY LIKELY, BUT WE CAN'T ELIMINATE THE POSSIBILITY THAT BILL'S ABILITY IS THE REAL DEAL, AND THIS IS ALL A DISTRACTION.
THEY PROCEED BY RELEASING INFORMATION PIECEMEAL.
YOU'RE RIGHT THAT WE'D BE DIGGING OUR OWN GRAVES BY BEING IMPATIENT.
HE'S A TOUGH ONE.
YES.
ENDORSED BY THE FIRST PRINCE'S SOLDIERS...
CAN YOU REAFFIRM THE PRINCE'S ORDERS?
YES.
KRII
UMM
UMM

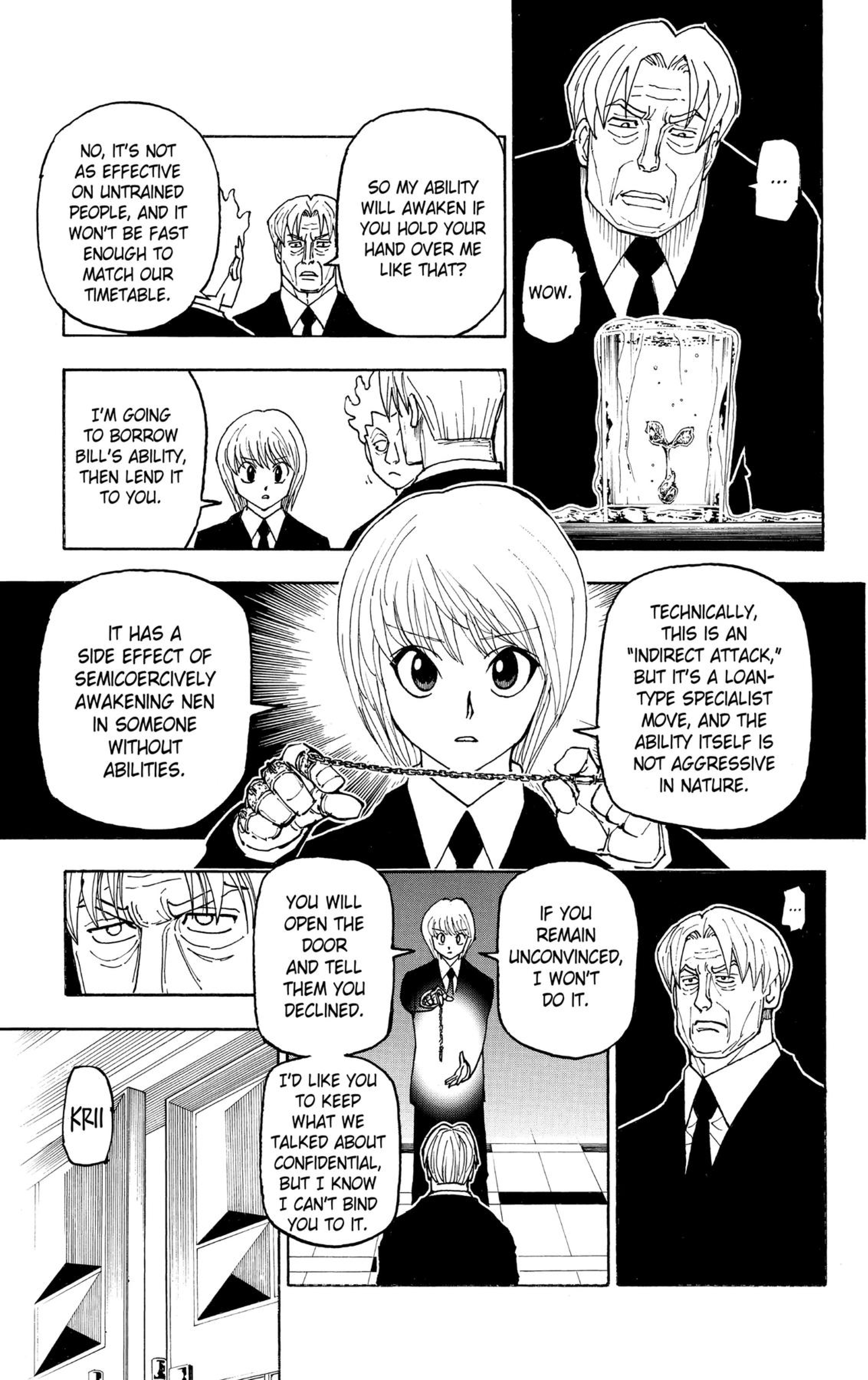

THE VOLUME OF AURA FLOW HAS CLEARLY INCREASED! THAT'S THE SIGN OF SOMEONE WHO'S LEARNED NEN AND IS READY FOR THE TRAINING TO CONTROL IT!
WITHOUT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE... YOU'D THINK SHE'D PRACTICED THE BASICS FOR AT LEAST THREE HOURS EVERY DAY FOR A YEAR.
WELL?
I CAN'T BE CERTAIN WITH ONLY ONE CASE...
...BUT I DON'T BELIEVE SHE'S BEING CONTROLLED.
WELL? YOU DID THE DIVINATION, DIDN'T YOU?
OH...
SORRY, I CAN'T TALK ABOUT IT.
FOR AN IMPARTIAL DIAGNOSIS AND TO AVOID GUESSWORK, I'M INSTITUTING A GAG ORDER ON ALL RESULTS UNTIL EVERYONE IS THROUGH.
IF A VIOLATION IS DISCOVERED, WE'LL CANCEL THE CLASS ITSELF ON THE SPOT.
I URGE YOU TO COMPLY.
I SUPPOSE TENFTORY, THE THIRD PRINCE'S ROYAL GUARD, WILL BE THE LAST TO GO.
?
THEY'RE USING GUARDS OF HIGHER-RANKED PRINCES TO DETER INTENTIONAL VIOLATIONS.
IF A VIOLATION CAUSES A CANCELLATION, I WOULD ALSO CENSURE THE CULPRIT.
MAOR, YOU'RE NEXT.
!
H
H

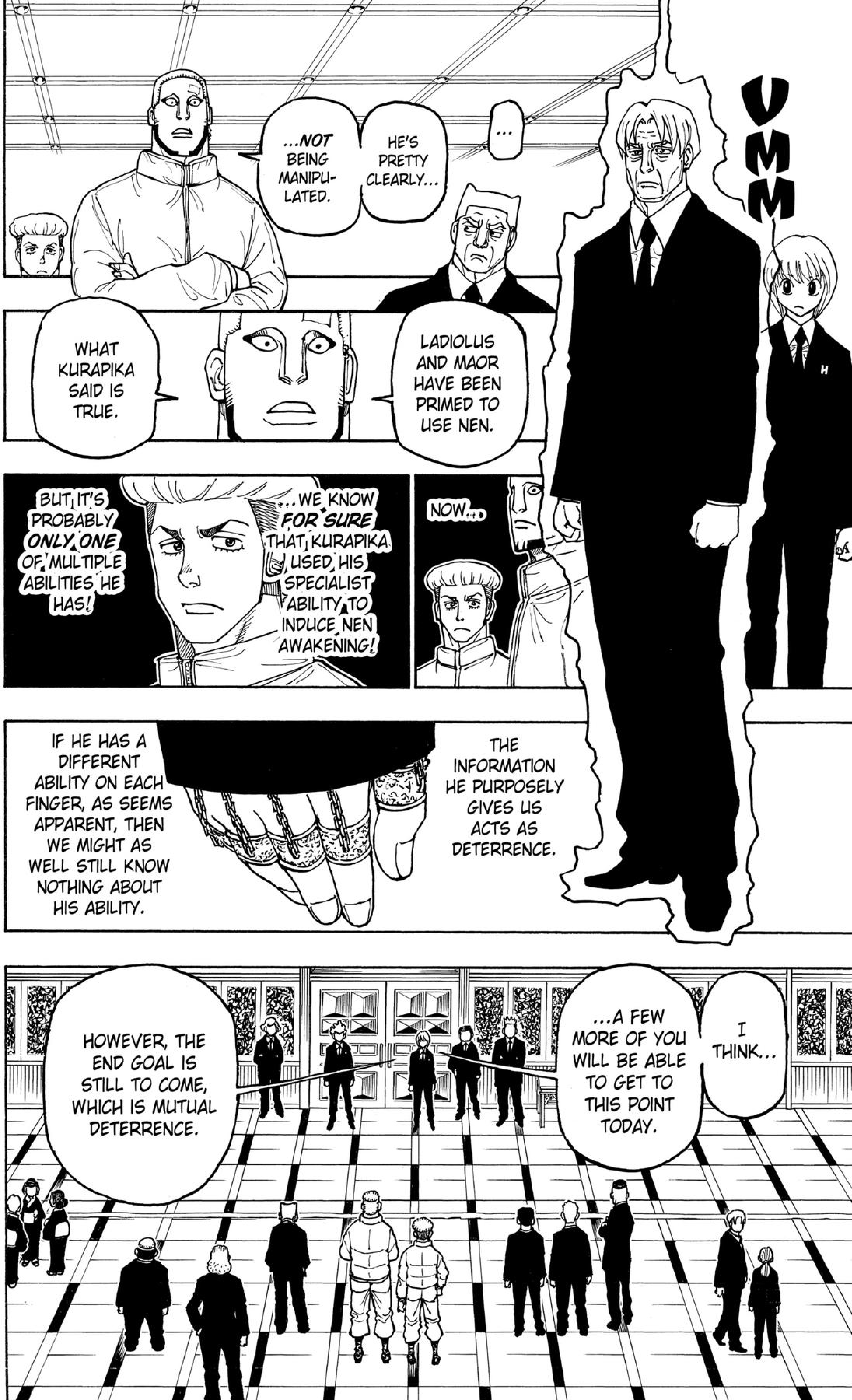

CONSIDERING YOUR AGE, YOUR LEARNING SPEED IS COMMENDABLE.
YOU MUST KEEP THINGS CONFIDENTIAL, EVEN TO LONGHI, DURING THIS TIME. IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
EVEN WHEN I KNOW IT'S STRATEGY AND A MEANS TO AN END, FLATTERY DOESN'T FEEL HALF BAD.
FINE, BUT IF I FEEL ANY DANGER, I MIGHT WITHDRAW.
OF COURSE.
THIS WAY, PLEASE.
...

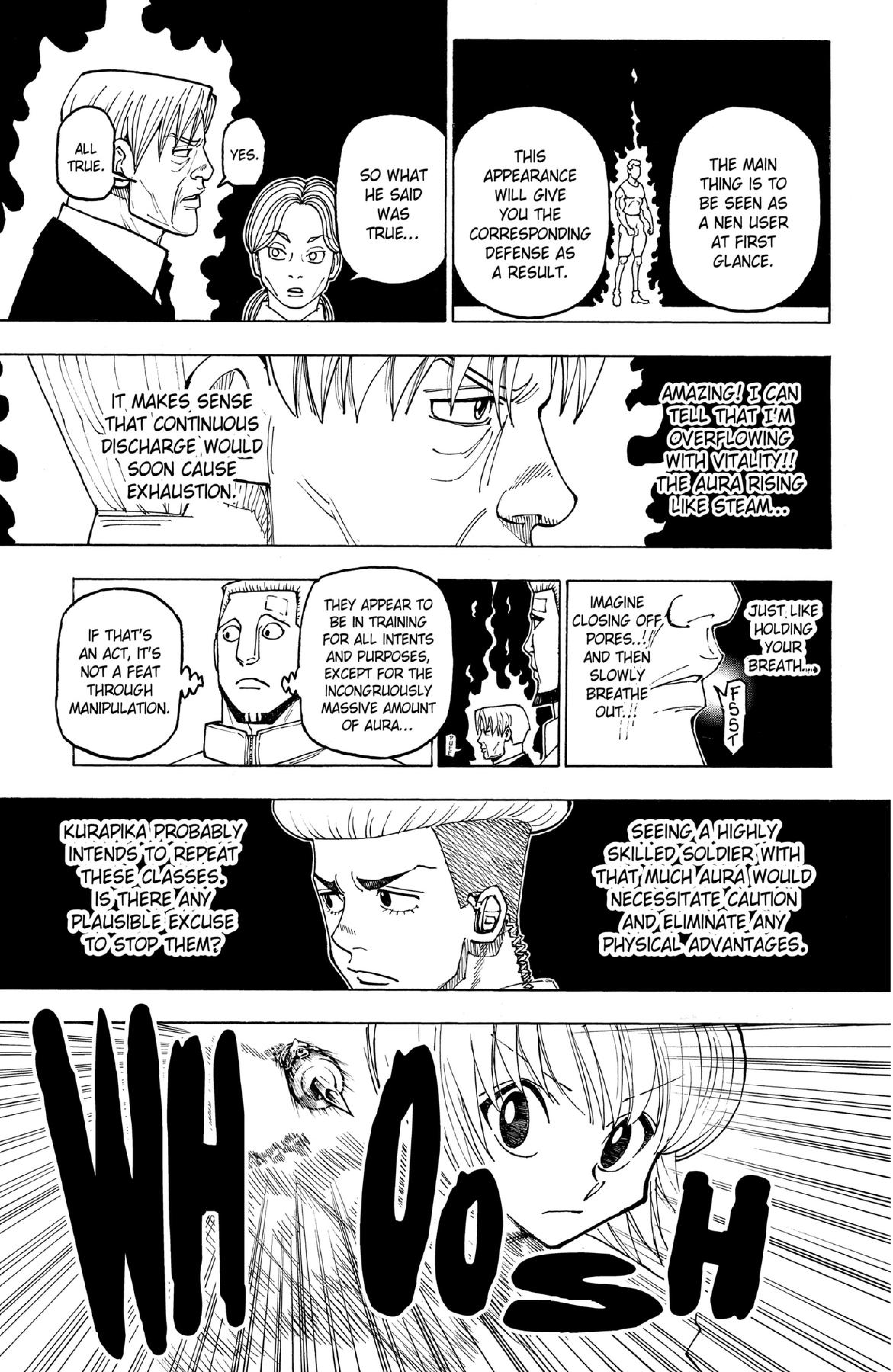

SO.
EVERYTHING I WILL SAY FROM HERE IS FACT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BELIEVE ME.
OUR PRIORITY IS TO PROTECT THE LIVES OF 14TH PRINCE WOBLE AND EIGHTH QUEEN OITO!
FOR THAT, I WILL SHARE NEN AND ITS INFORMATION WITH YOU.
YOU WERE SINCERE THAT YOUR GOAL IS A STALEMATE THROUGH A BALANCE OF FORCES...
EXACTLY.
THE WATER DIVINATION IS NORMALLY USED TO DISTINGUISH ABILITY TYPE ONCE YOU'VE LEARNED NEN.
HERE IT WILL BE USED TO DEMONSTRATE A SUCCESSFUL AWAKENING TO NEN.
A SEED IS INSIDE THE CUP.
NORMALLY, IT WOULD BE WATER AND NOTHING ELSE.
BUT IN THIS CASE...
...IT'S A NECESSARY PART OF THE PROCESS.

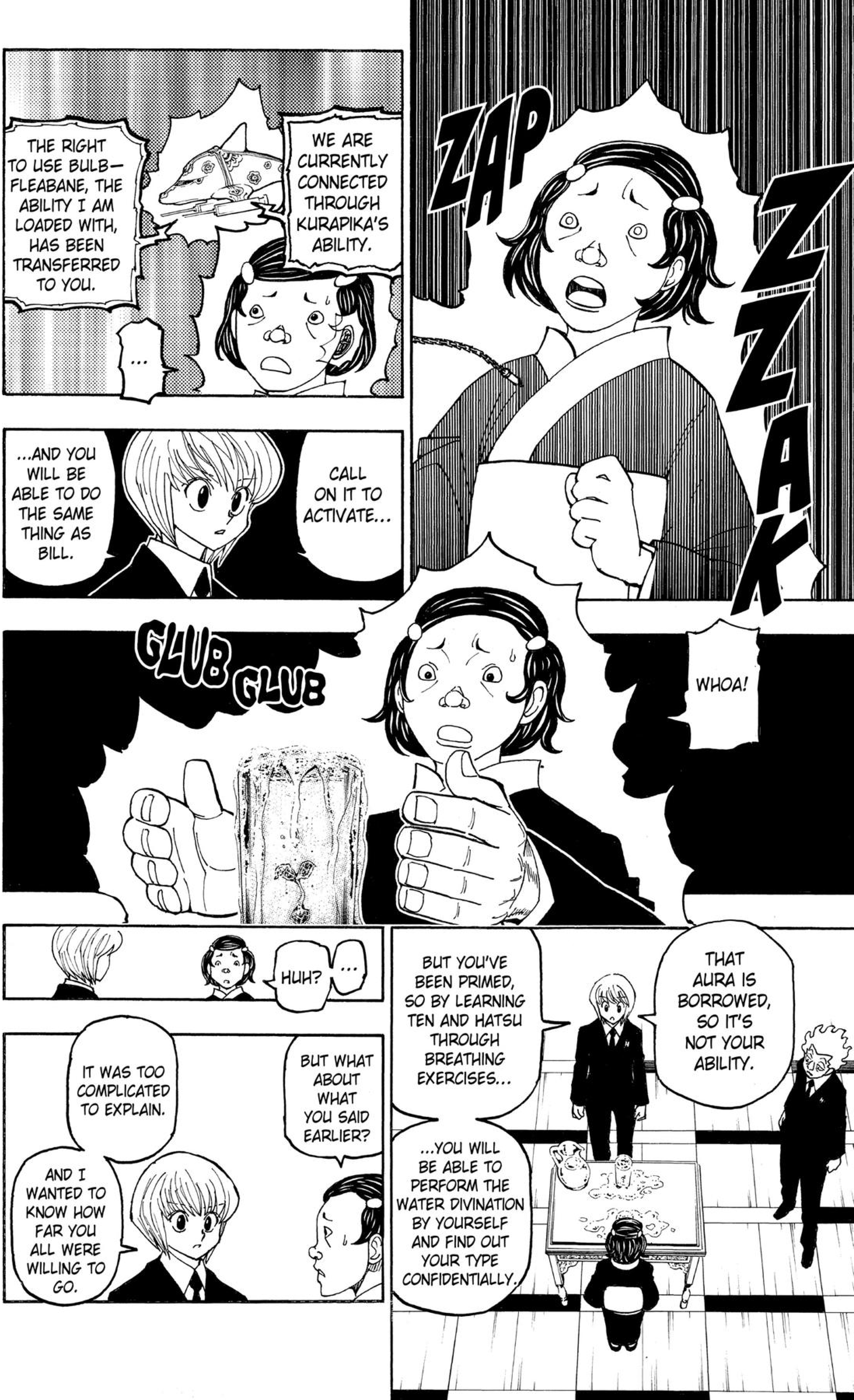

PLEASE CONTINUE...
LIKE I'VE EXPLAINED THROUGHOUT THIS WEEK, NEN CAN BE LEARNED BY ANYONE.
BUT HOW QUICKLY PEOPLE LEARN VARIES, AND IT CANNOT BE MASTERED IN A DAY.
THE UNORTHODOX METHOD IS TO FORCE IT...
...THROUGH AN ATTACK USING NEN!
CAUTION...
...IS A NORMAL RESPONSE.
BUT I SWEAR I WILL NOT HARM ANY OF YOU.
THE WORD "ATTACK" IS CONVENIENT FOR CONVEYING HOW TABOO IT IS...
...BUT THE TERM ALSO INCLUDES HEALING AND LENDING ABILITIES.
...
I SEE.
BILL?
VMM

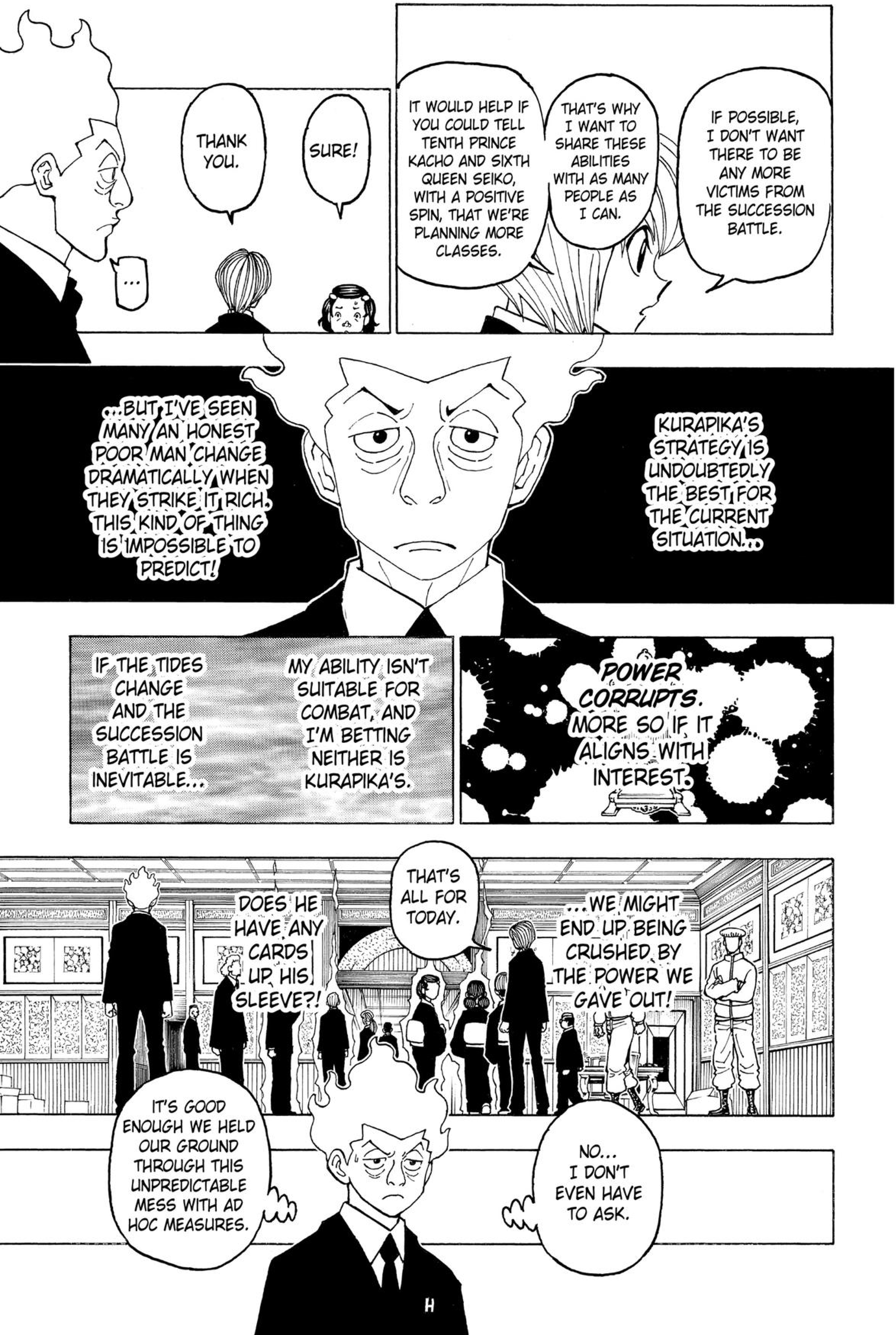

HM ...?!
DRIP
FSSH
BILL IS AN *ENHANCER.*
HE CAN INDUCE THE GROWTH OF HIS TARGET WITH HIS HATSU.
GLUB GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
...

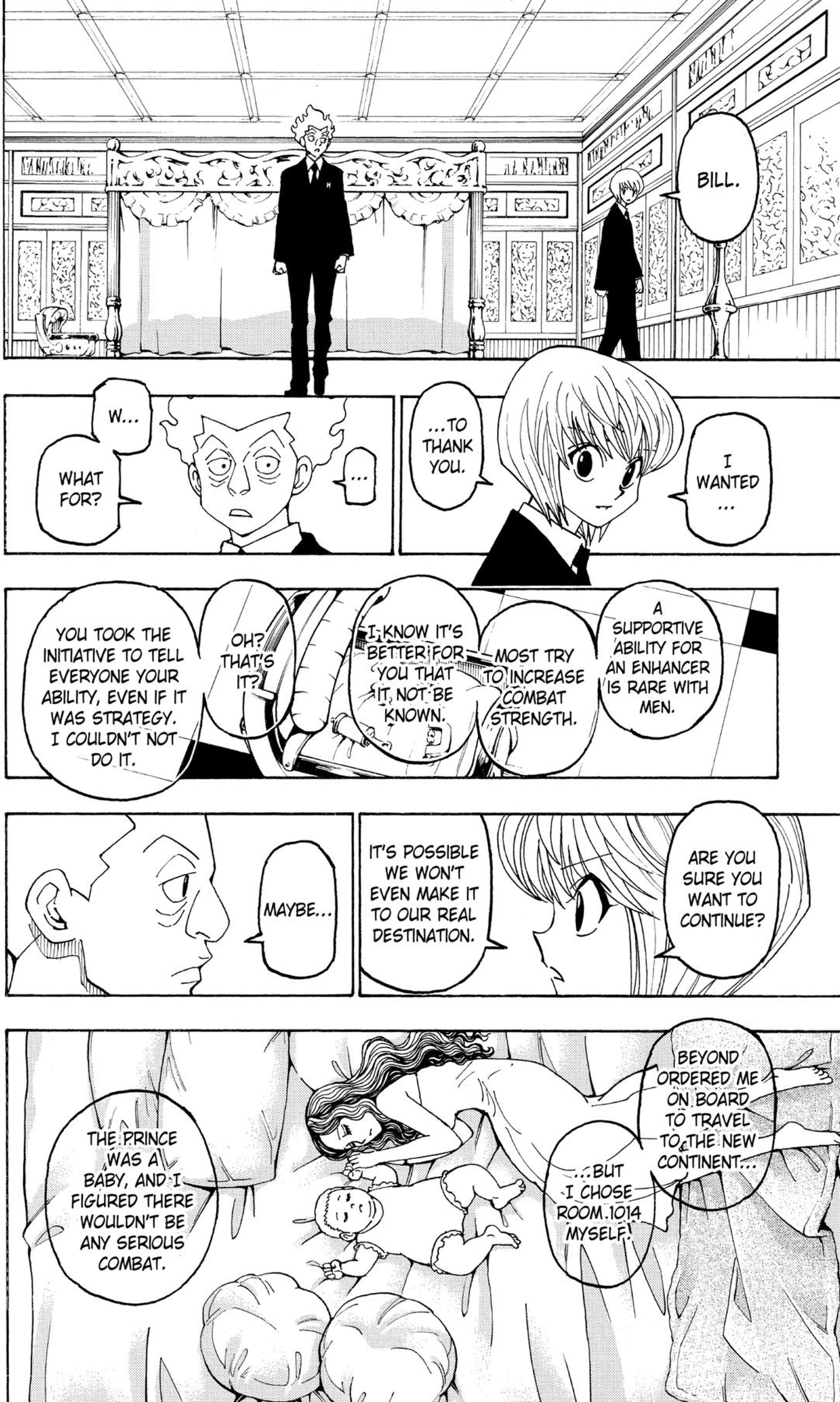

...
WOW.
SO MY ABILITY WILL AWAKEN IF YOU HOLD YOUR HAND OVER ME LIKE THAT?
NO, IT'S NOT AS EFFECTIVE ON UNTRAINED PEOPLE, AND IT WON'T BE FAST ENOUGH TO MATCH OUR TIMETABLE.
I'M GOING TO BORROW BILL'S ABILITY, THEN LEND IT TO YOU.
TECHNICALLY, THIS IS AN "INDIRECT ATTACK," BUT IT'S A LOAN-TYPE SPECIALIST MOVE, AND THE ABILITY ITSELF IS NOT AGGRESSIVE IN NATURE.
IT HAS A SIDE EFFECT OF SEMICOERCIVELY AWAKENING NEN IN SOMEONE WITHOUT ABILITIES.
...
IF YOU REMAIN UNCONVINCED, I WON'T DO IT.
YOU WILL OPEN THE DOOR AND TELL THEM YOU DECLINED.
I'D LIKE YOU TO KEEP WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT CONFIDENTIAL, BUT I KNOW I CAN'T BIND YOU TO IT.
KRII

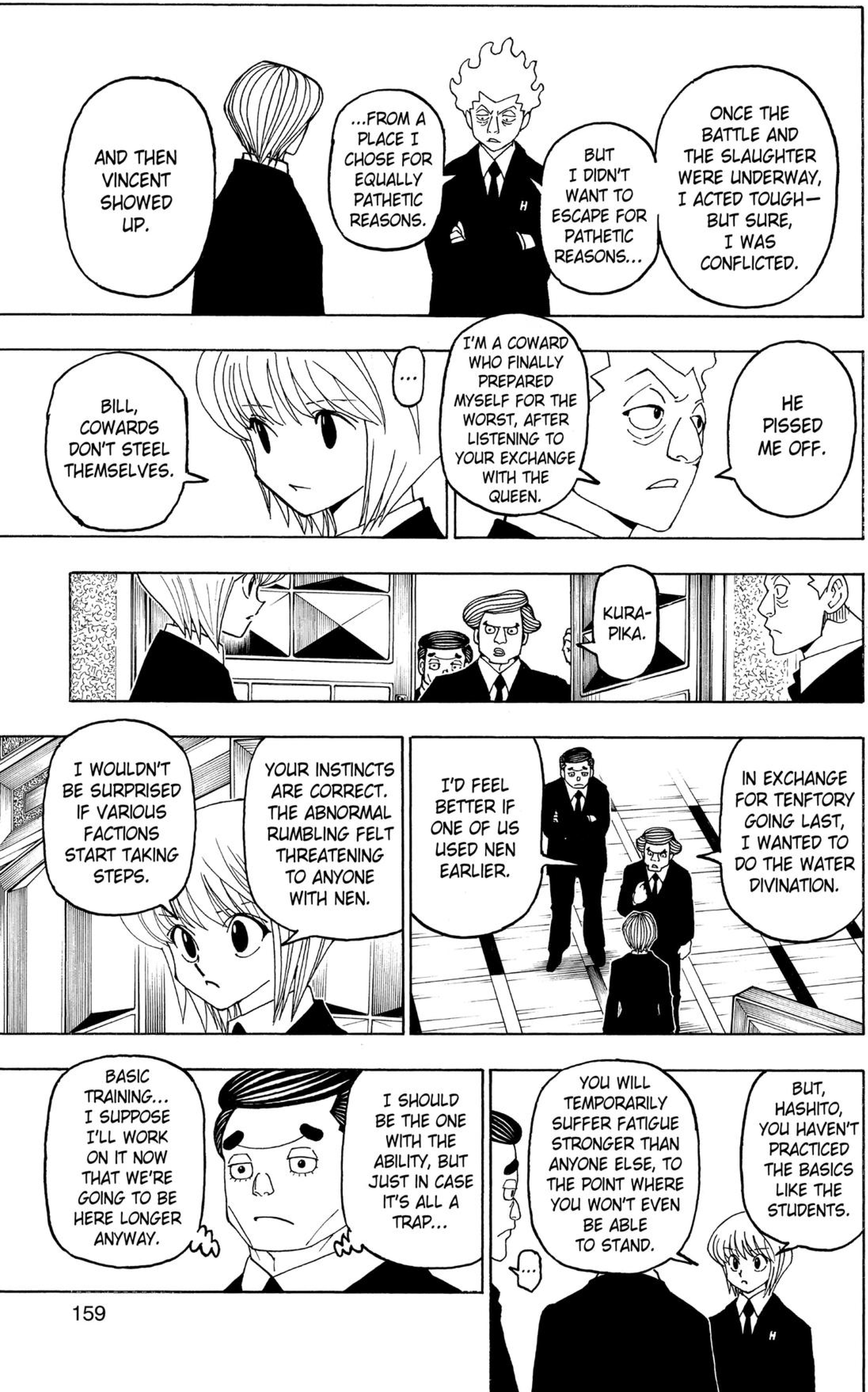

VMM
...
HE'S PRETTY CLEARLY...
...NOT BEING MANIPULATED.
LADIOLUS AND MAOR HAVE BEEN PRIMED TO USE NEN.
WHAT KURAPIKA SAID IS TRUE.
NOW...
...WE KNOW FOR SURE THAT KURAPIKA USED HIS SPECIALIST ABILITY TO INDUCE NEN AWAKENING!
BUT IT'S PROBABLY ONLY ONE OF MULTIPLE ABILITIES HE HAS!
THE INFORMATION HE PURPOSELY GIVES US ACTS AS DETERRENCE.
IF HE HAS A DIFFERENT ABILITY ON EACH FINGER, AS SEEMS APPARENT, THEN WE MIGHT AS WELL STILL KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HIS ABILITY.
I THINK...
...A FEW MORE OF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GET TO THIS POINT TODAY.
HOWEVER, THE END GOAL IS STILL TO COME, WHICH IS MUTUAL DETERRENCE.

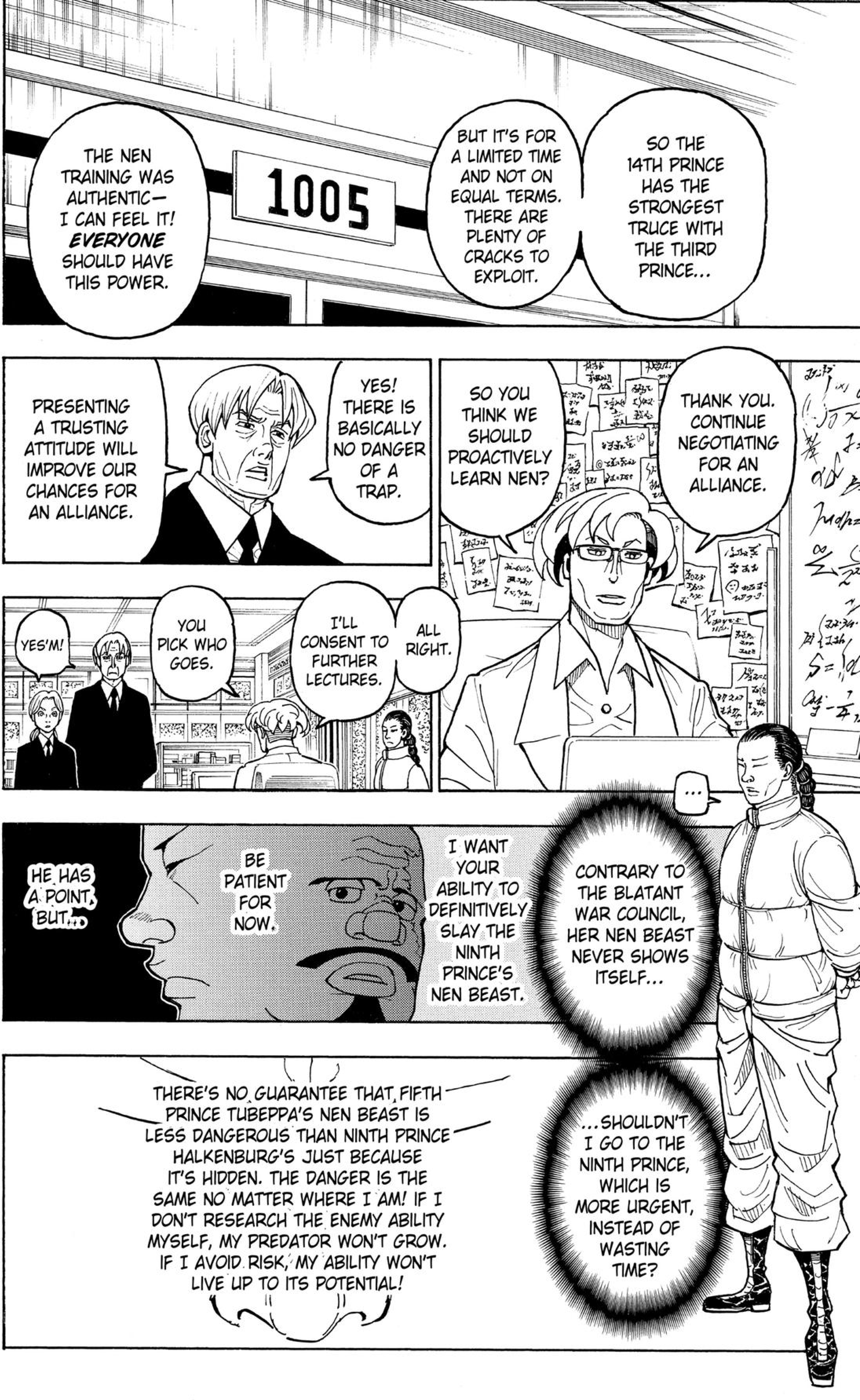

THE MAIN THING IS TO BE SEEN AS A NEN USER AT FIRST GLANCE.
THIS APPEARANCE WILL GIVE YOU THE CORRESPONDING DEFENSE AS A RESULT.
SO WHAT HE SAID WAS TRUE...
YES.
ALL TRUE.
AMAZING! I CAN TELL THAT I'M OVERFLOWING WITH VITALITY!! THE AURA RISING LIKE STEAM...
IT MAKES SENSE THAT CONTINUOUS DISCHARGE WOULD SOON CAUSE EXHAUSTION.
JUST LIKE HOLDING YOUR BREATH...
FSST
IMAGINE CLOSING OFF PORES..! AND THEN SLOWLY BREATHE OUT..!
THEY APPEAR TO BE IN TRAINING FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, EXCEPT FOR THE INCONGRUOUSLY MASSIVE AMOUNT OF AURA...
IF THAT'S AN ACT, IT'S NOT A FEAT THROUGH MANIPULATION.
SEEING A HIGHLY SKILLED SOLDIER WITH THAT MUCH AURA WOULD NECESSITATE CAUTION AND ELIMINATE ANY PHYSICAL ADVANTAGES.
KURAPIKA PROBABLY INTENDS TO REPEAT THESE CLASSES. IS THERE ANY PLAUSIBLE EXCUSE TO STOP THEM?
WHOOSH

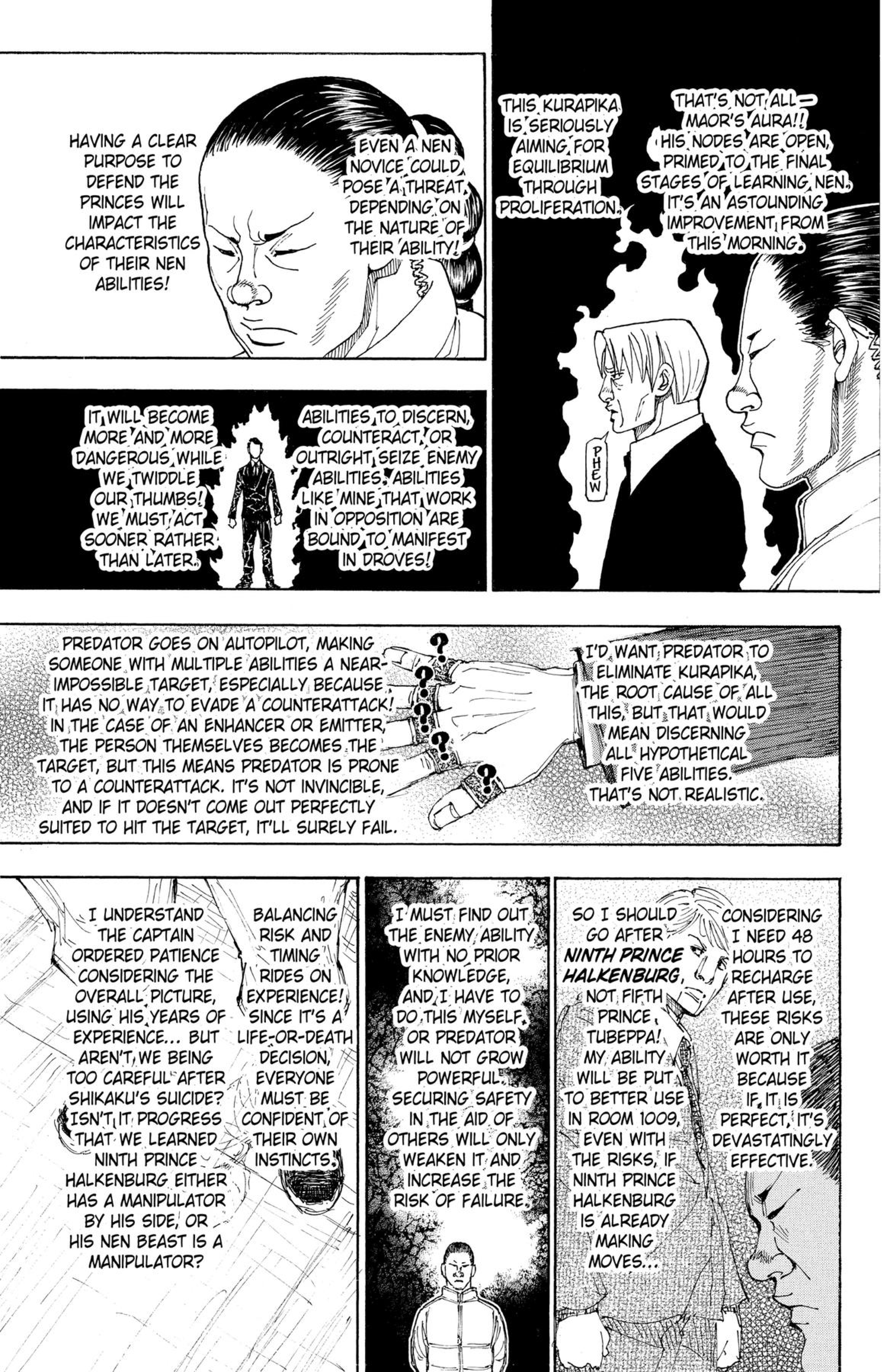

ZAP
ZZAK
WE ARE CURRENTLY CONNECTED THROUGH KURAPIKA'S ABILITY.
THE RIGHT TO USE BULB-FLEABANE, THE ABILITY I AM LOADED WITH, HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO YOU.
...
CALL ON IT TO ACTIVATE...
...AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME THING AS BILL.
WHOA!
GLUB GLUB
THAT AURA IS BORROWED, SO IT'S NOT YOUR ABILITY.
BUT YOU'VE BEEN PRIMED, SO BY LEARNING TEN AND HATSU THROUGH BREATHING EXERCISES...
...YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE WATER DIVINATION BY YOURSELF AND FIND OUT YOUR TYPE CONFIDENTIALLY.
...
HUH?
BUT WHAT ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER?
IT WAS TOO COMPLICATED TO EXPLAIN.
AND I WANTED TO KNOW HOW FAR YOU ALL WERE WILLING TO GO.

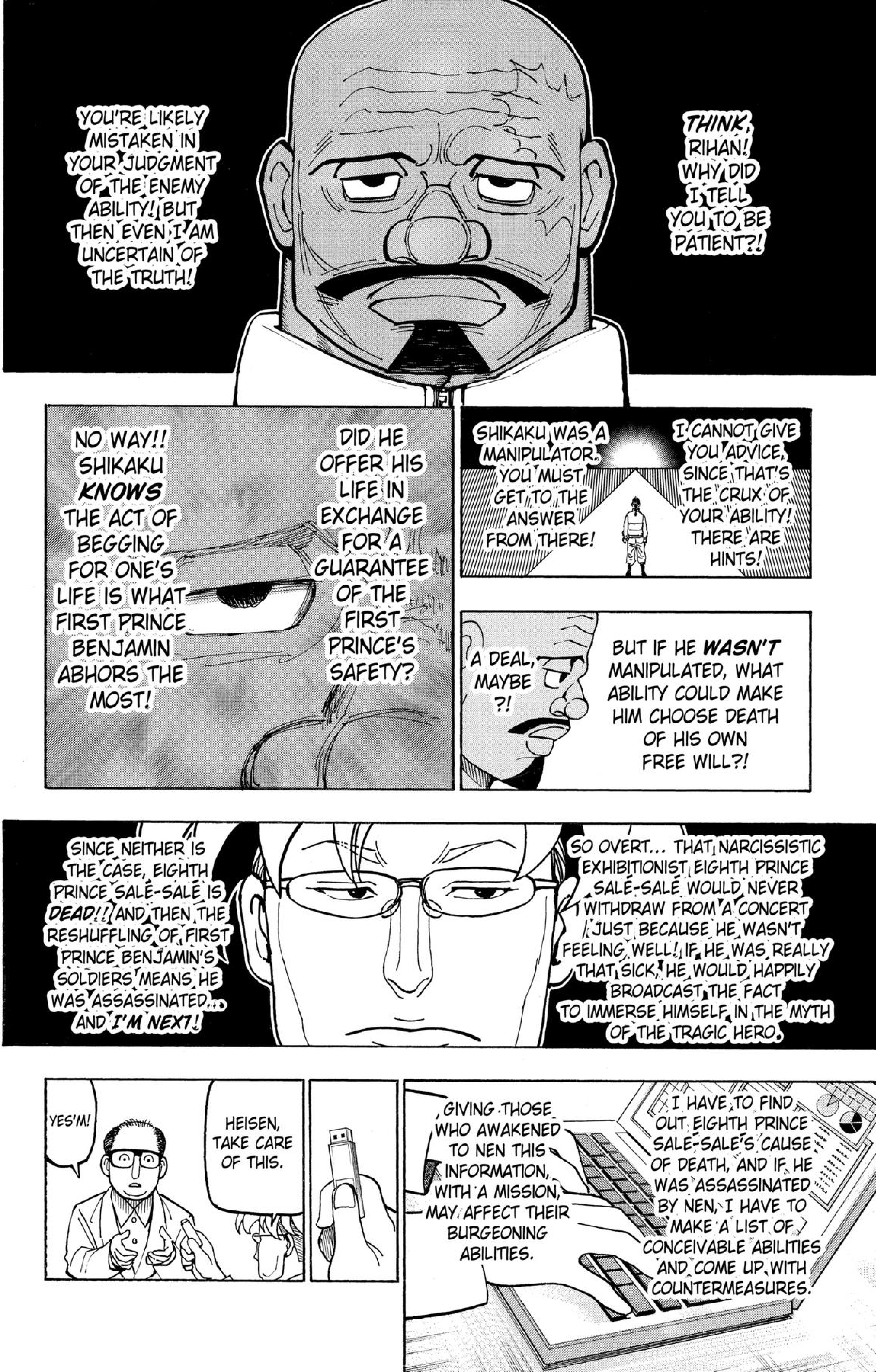

IF POSSIBLE, I DON'T WANT THERE TO BE ANY MORE VICTIMS FROM THE SUCCESSION BATTLE.
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO SHARE THESE ABILITIES WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS I CAN.
IT WOULD HELP IF YOU COULD TELL TENTH PRINCE KACHO AND SIXTH QUEEN SEIKO, WITH A POSITIVE SPIN, THAT WE'RE PLANNING MORE CLASSES.
SURE!
THANK YOU.
...
KURAPIKA'S STRATEGY IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE BEST FOR THE CURRENT SITUATION...
...BUT I'VE SEEN MANY AN HONEST POOR MAN CHANGE DRAMATICALLY WHEN THEY STRIKE IT RICH. THIS KIND OF THING IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT!
POWER CORRUPTS. MORE SO IF IT ALIGNS WITH INTEREST.
MY ABILITY ISN'T SUITABLE FOR COMBAT, AND I'M BETTING NEITHER IS KURAPIKA'S.
IF THE TIDES CHANGE AND THE SUCCESSION BATTLE IS INEVITABLE...
...WE MIGHT END UP BEING CRUSHED BY THE POWER WE GAVE OUT!
THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY.
DOES HE HAVE ANY CARDS UP HIS SLEEVE?!
NO... I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO ASK.
IT'S GOOD ENOUGH WE HELD OUR GROUND THROUGH THIS UNPREDICTABLE MESS WITH AD HOC MEASURES.

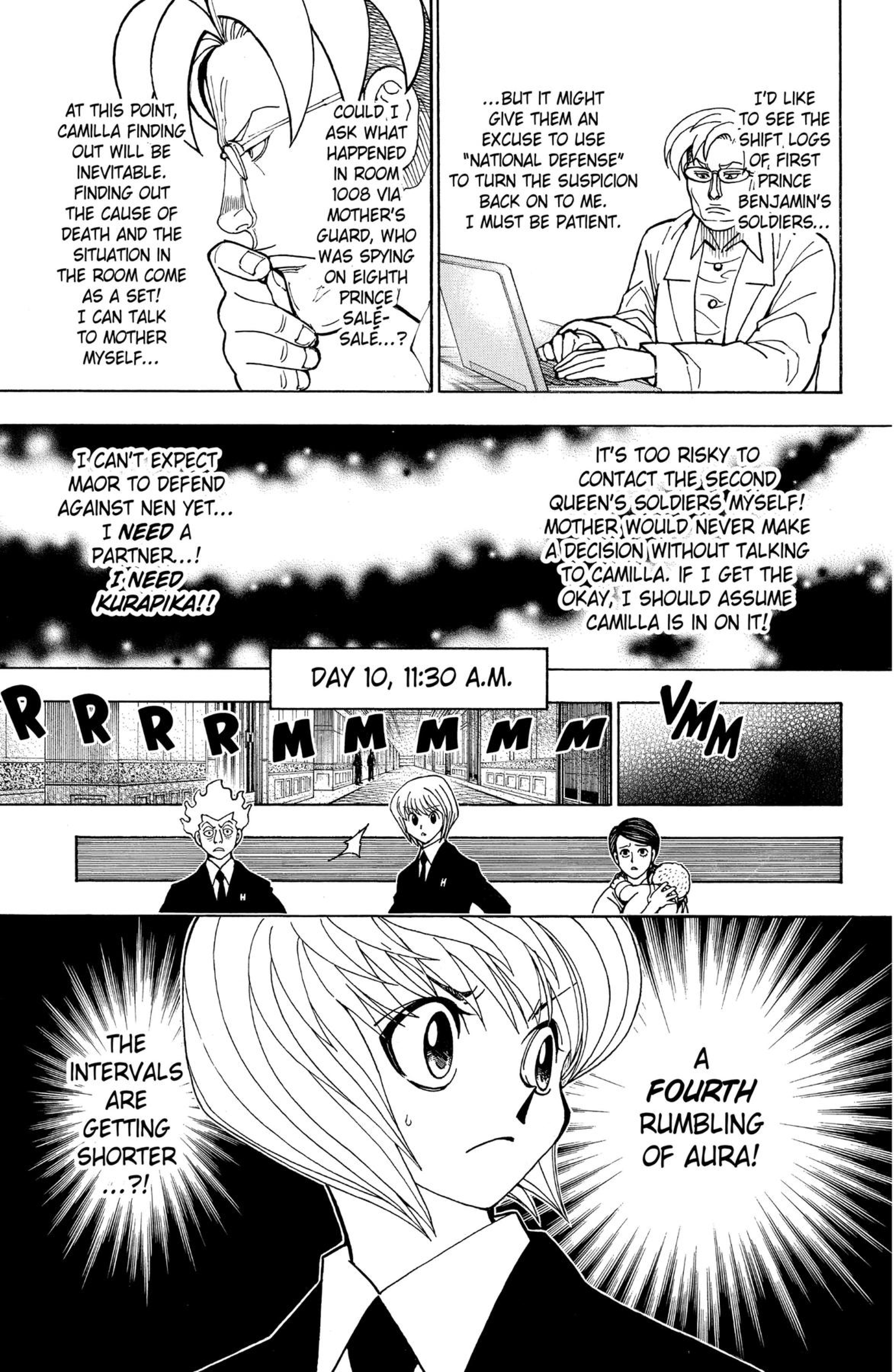

BILL.
I WANTED...
...TO THANK YOU.
...
W...
WHAT FOR?
A SUPPORTIVE ABILITY FOR AN ENHANCER IS RARE WITH MEN.
MOST TRY TO INCREASE COMBAT STRENGTH.
I KNOW IT'S BETTER FOR YOU THAT IT NOT BE KNOWN.
OH? THAT'S IT?
YOU TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO TELL EVERYONE YOUR ABILITY, EVEN IF IT WAS STRATEGY. I COULDN'T NOT DO IT.
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO CONTINUE?
IT'S POSSIBLE WE WON'T EVEN MAKE IT TO OUR REAL DESTINATION.
MAYBE...
BEYOND ORDERED ME ON BOARD TO TRAVEL TO THE NEW CONTINENT...
...BUT I CHOSE ROOM 1014 MYSELF!
THE PRINCE WAS A BABY, AND I FIGURED THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY SERIOUS COMBAT.


ONCE THE BATTLE AND THE SLAUGHTER WERE UNDERWAY, I ACTED TOUGH— BUT SURE, I WAS CONFLICTED.
BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO ESCAPE FOR PATHETIC REASONS...
...FROM A PLACE I CHOSE FOR EQUALLY PATHETIC REASONS.
AND THEN VINCENT SHOWED UP.
HE PISSED ME OFF.
I'M A COWARD WHO FINALLY PREPARED MYSELF FOR THE WORST, AFTER LISTENING TO YOUR EXCHANGE WITH THE QUEEN.
...
BILL, COWARDS DON'T STEEL THEMSELVES.
KURA-PIKA.
IN EXCHANGE FOR TENFTORY GOING LAST, I WANTED TO DO THE WATER DIVINATION.
I'D FEEL BETTER IF ONE OF US USED NEN EARLIER.
YOUR INSTINCTS ARE CORRECT. THE ABNORMAL RUMBLING FELT THREATENING TO ANYONE WITH NEN.
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF VARIOUS FACTIONS START TAKING STEPS.
BUT, HASHITO, YOU HAVEN'T PRACTICED THE BASICS LIKE THE STUDENTS.
YOU WILL TEMPORARILY SUFFER FATIGUE STRONGER THAN ANYONE ELSE, TO THE POINT WHERE YOU WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO STAND.
...
I SHOULD BE THE ONE WITH THE ABILITY, BUT JUST IN CASE IT'S ALL A TRAP...
BASIC TRAINING... I SUPPOSE I'LL WORK ON IT NOW THAT WE'RE GOING TO BE HERE LONGER ANYWAY.

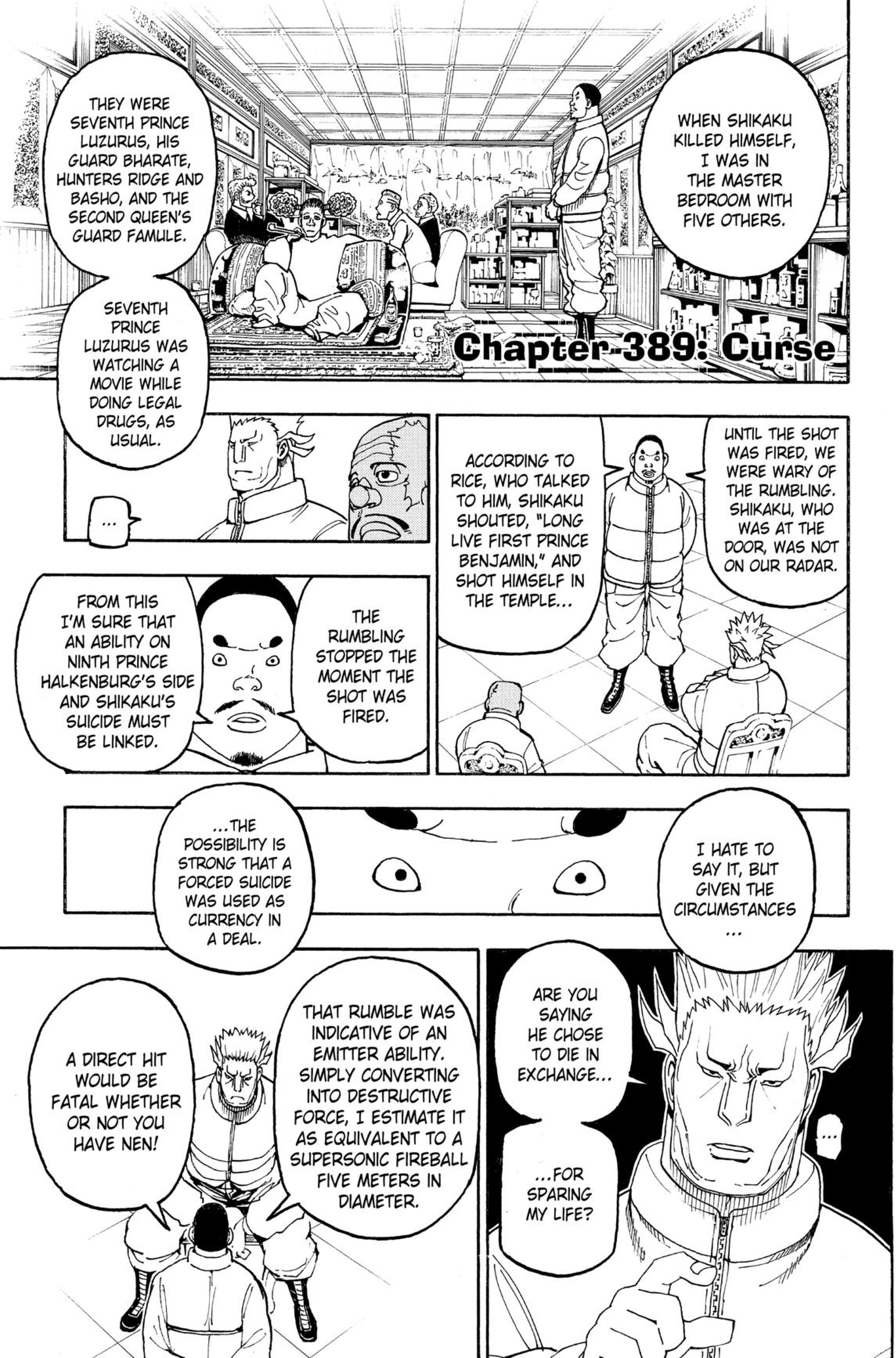

1005
SO THE 14TH PRINCE HAS THE STRONGEST TRUCE WITH THE THIRD PRINCE...
BUT IT'S FOR A LIMITED TIME AND NOT ON EQUAL TERMS. THERE ARE PLENTY OF CRACKS TO EXPLOIT.
THE NEN TRAINING WAS AUTHENTIC— I CAN FEEL IT! ***EVERYONE*** SHOULD HAVE THIS POWER.
THANK YOU. CONTINUE NEGOTIATING FOR AN ALLIANCE.
SO YOU THINK WE SHOULD PROACTIVELY LEARN NEN?
YES! THERE IS BASICALLY NO DANGER OF A TRAP.
PRESENTING A TRUSTING ATTITUDE WILL IMPROVE OUR CHANCES FOR AN ALLIANCE.
ALL RIGHT.
I'LL CONSENT TO FURTHER LECTURES.
YOU PICK WHO GOES.
YES'M!
...
CONTRARY TO THE BLATANT WAR COUNCIL, HER NEN BEAST NEVER SHOWS ITSELF...
I WANT YOUR ABILITY TO DEFINITIVELY SLAY THE NINTH PRINCE'S NEN BEAST.
BE PATIENT FOR NOW.
HE HAS A POINT, BUT...
...SHOULDN'T I GO TO THE NINTH PRINCE, WHICH IS MORE URGENT, INSTEAD OF WASTING TIME?
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT FIFTH PRINCE TUBEPPA'S NEN BEAST IS LESS DANGEROUS THAN NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG'S JUST BECAUSE IT'S HIDDEN. THE DANGER IS THE SAME NO MATTER WHERE I AM! IF I DON'T RESEARCH THE ENEMY ABILITY MYSELF, MY PREDATOR WON'T GROW. IF I AVOID RISK, MY ABILITY WON'T LIVE UP TO ITS POTENTIAL!

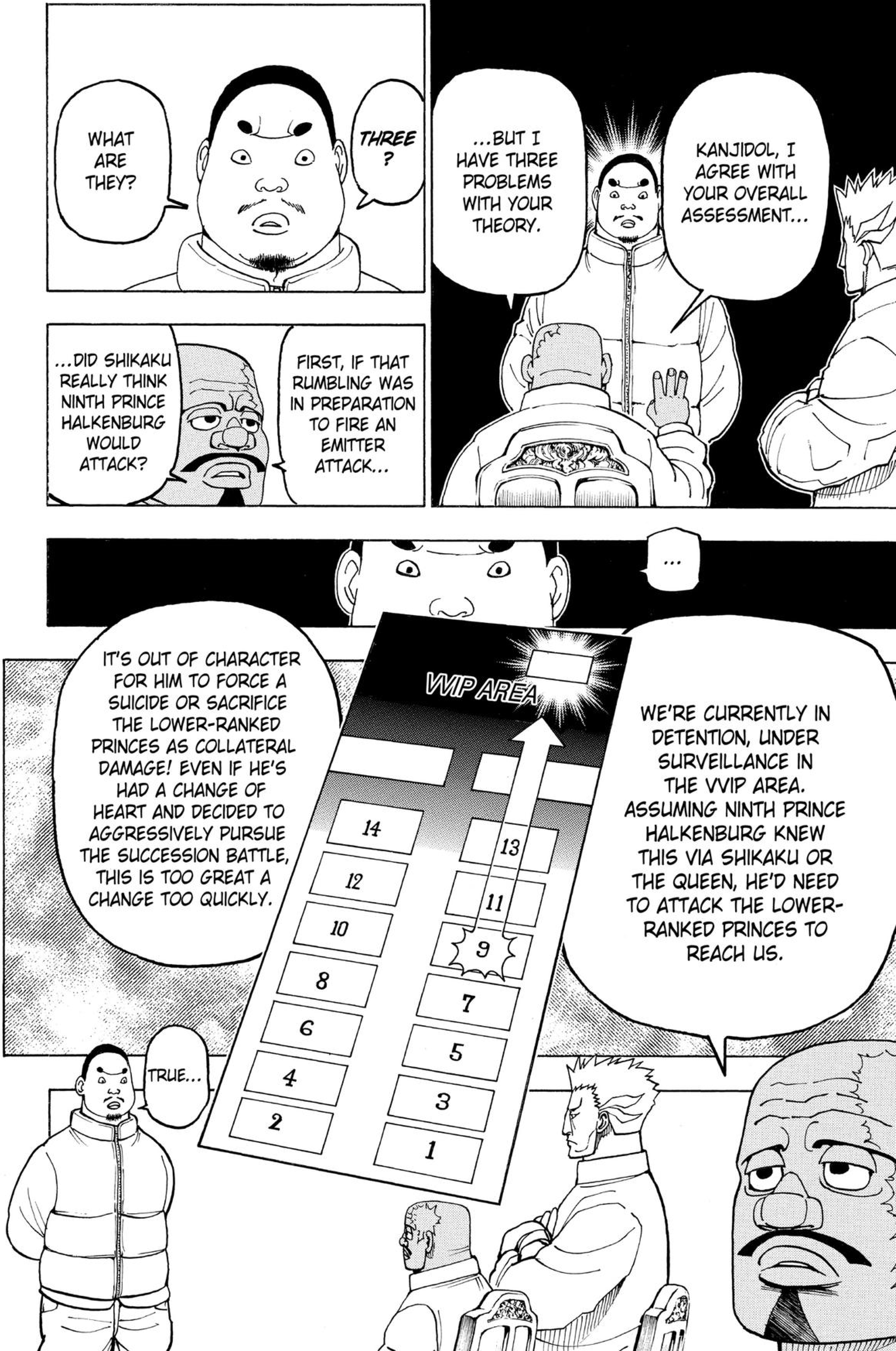

HAVING A CLEAR PURPOSE TO DEFEND THE PRINCES WILL IMPACT THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR NEN ABILITIES!
EVEN A NEN NOVICE COULD POSE A THREAT, DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THEIR ABILITY!
THIS KURAPIKA IS SERIOUSLY AIMING FOR EQUILIBRIUM THROUGH PROLIFERATION.
THAT'S NOT ALL— MAOR'S AURA!! HIS NODES ARE OPEN, PRIMED TO THE FINAL STAGES OF LEARNING NEN. IT'S AN ASTOUNDING IMPROVEMENT FROM THIS MORNING.
PHEW
IT WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE DANGEROUS WHILE WE TWIDDLE OUR THUMBS! WE MUST ACT SOONER RATHER THAN LATER.
ABILITIES TO DISCERN, COUNTERACT, OR OUTRIGHT SEIZE ENEMY ABILITIES. ABILITIES LIKE MINE THAT WORK IN OPPOSITION ARE BOUND TO MANIFEST IN DROVES!
PREDATOR GOES ON AUTOPILOT, MAKING SOMEONE WITH MULTIPLE ABILITIES A NEAR-IMPOSSIBLE TARGET, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE IT HAS NO WAY TO EVADE A COUNTERATTACK! IN THE CASE OF AN ENHANCER OR EMITTER, THE PERSON THEMSELVES BECOMES THE TARGET, BUT THIS MEANS PREDATOR IS PRONE TO A COUNTERATTACK. IT'S NOT INVINCIBLE, AND IF IT DOESN'T COME OUT PERFECTLY SUITED TO HIT THE TARGET, IT'LL SURELY FAIL.
?
?
?
?
?
I'D WANT PREDATOR TO ELIMINATE KURAPIKA, THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL THIS, BUT THAT WOULD MEAN DISCERNING ALL HYPOTHETICAL FIVE ABILITIES. THAT'S NOT REALISTIC.
I UNDERSTAND THE CAPTAIN ORDERED PATIENCE CONSIDERING THE OVERALL PICTURE, USING HIS YEARS OF EXPERIENCE... BUT AREN'T WE BEING TOO CAREFUL AFTER SHIKAKU'S SUICIDE? ISN'T IT PROGRESS THAT WE LEARNED NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG EITHER HAS A MANIPULATOR BY HIS SIDE, OR HIS NEN BEAST IS A MANIPULATOR?
BALANCING RISK AND TIMING RIDES ON EXPERIENCE! SINCE IT'S A LIFE-OR-DEATH DECISION, EVERYONE MUST BE CONFIDENT OF THEIR OWN INSTINCTS.
I MUST FIND OUT THE ENEMY ABILITY WITH NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, AND I HAVE TO DO THIS MYSELF, OR PREDATOR WILL NOT GROW POWERFUL. SECURING SAFETY IN THE AID OF OTHERS WILL ONLY WEAKEN IT AND INCREASE THE RISK OF FAILURE.
SO I SHOULD GO AFTER ***NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG***, NOT FIFTH PRINCE TUBEPPA! MY ABILITY WILL BE PUT TO BETTER USE IN ROOM 1009, EVEN WITH THE RISKS, IF NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG IS ALREADY MAKING MOVES...
CONSIDERING I NEED 48 HOURS TO RECHARGE AFTER USE, THESE RISKS ARE ONLY WORTH IT BECAUSE IF IT IS PERFECT, IT'S DEVASTATINGLY EFFECTIVE.

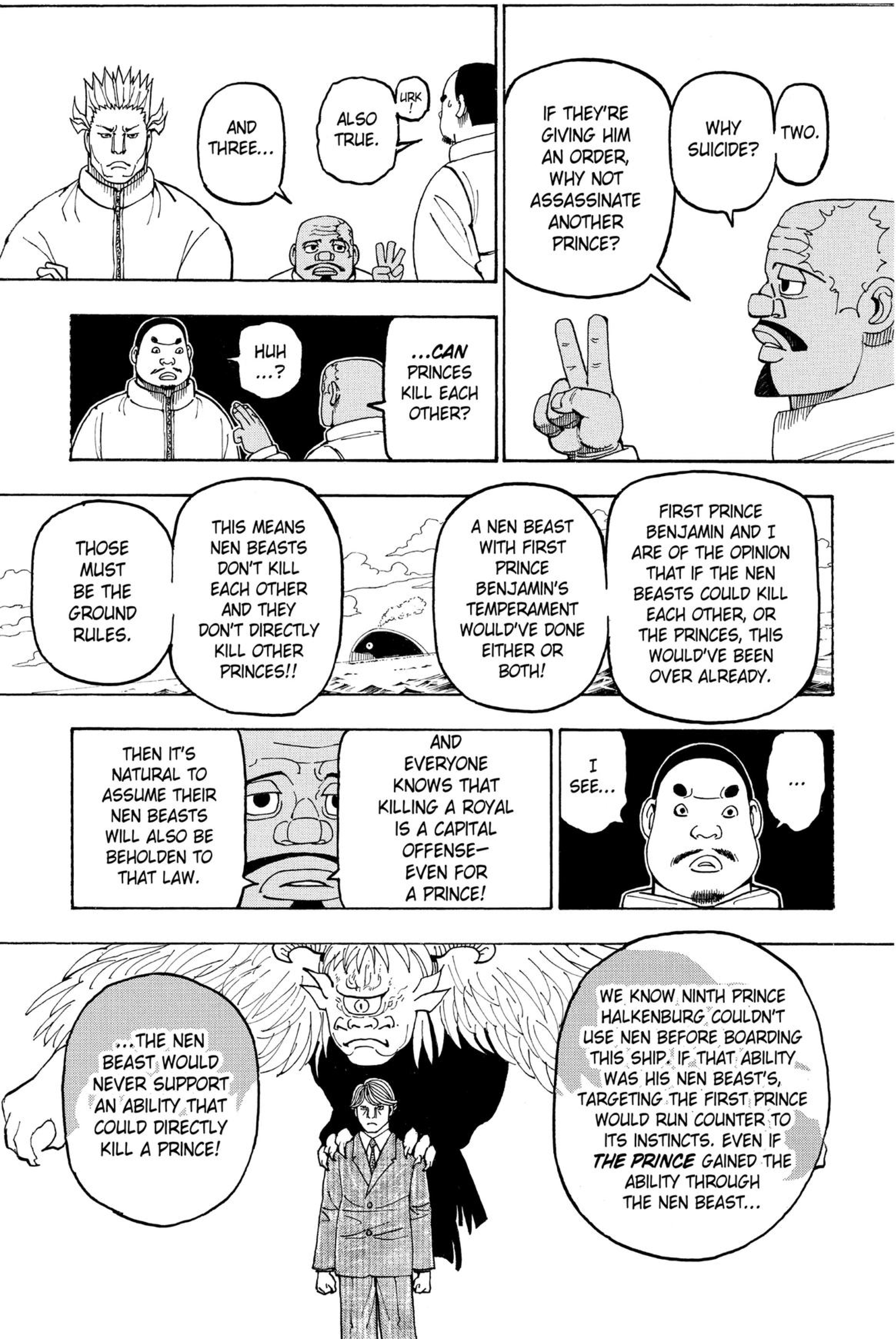

THINK, RIHAN! WHY DID I TELL YOU TO BE PATIENT?!
YOU'RE LIKELY MISTAKEN IN YOUR JUDGMENT OF THE ENEMY ABILITY! BUT THEN EVEN I AM UNCERTAIN OF THE TRUTH!
I CANNOT GIVE YOU ADVICE, SINCE THAT'S THE CRUX OF YOUR ABILITY! THERE ARE HINTS!
SHIKAKU WAS A MANIPULATOR. YOU MUST GET TO THE ANSWER FROM THERE!
BUT IF HE WASN'T MANIPULATED, WHAT ABILITY COULD MAKE HIM CHOOSE DEATH OF HIS OWN FREE WILL?!
A DEAL, MAYBE?!
DID HE OFFER HIS LIFE IN EXCHANGE FOR A GUARANTEE OF THE FIRST PRINCE'S SAFETY?
NO WAY!! SHIKAKU KNOWS THE ACT OF BEGGING FOR ONE'S LIFE IS WHAT FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN ABHORS THE MOST!
SO OVERT... THAT NARCISSISTIC EXHIBITIONIST EIGHTH PRINCE SALE-SALE WOULD NEVER WITHDRAW FROM A CONCERT JUST BECAUSE HE WASN'T FEELING WELL! IF HE WAS REALLY THAT SICK, HE WOULD HAPPILY BROADCAST THE FACT TO IMMERSE HIMSELF IN THE MYTH OF THE TRAGIC HERO.
SINCE NEITHER IS THE CASE, EIGHTH PRINCE SALE-SALE IS DEAD!! AND THEN THE RESHUFFLING OF FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN'S SOLDIERS MEANS HE WAS ASSASSINATED... AND I'M NEXT!
I HAVE TO FIND OUT EIGHTH PRINCE SALE-SALE'S CAUSE OF DEATH, AND IF HE WAS ASSASSINATED BY NEN, I HAVE TO MAKE A LIST OF CONCEIVABLE ABILITIES AND COME UP WITH COUNTERMEASURES.
GIVING THOSE WHO AWAKENED TO NEN THIS INFORMATION, WITH A MISSION, MAY AFFECT THEIR BURGEONING ABILITIES.
HEISEN, TAKE CARE OF THIS.
YES'M!

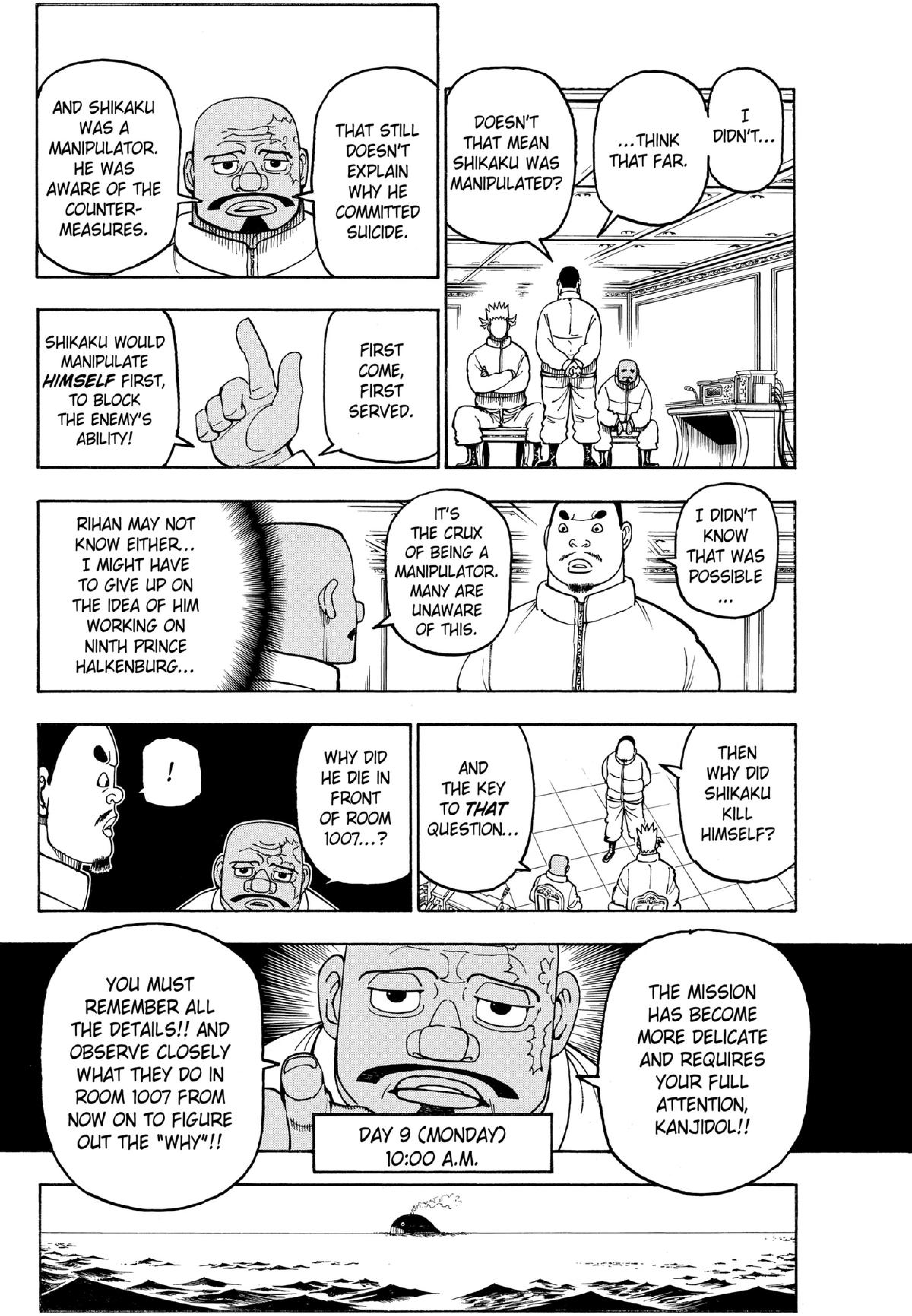

I'D LIKE TO SEE THE SHIFT LOGS OF FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN'S SOLDIERS...
...BUT IT MIGHT GIVE THEM AN EXCUSE TO USE "NATIONAL DEFENSE" TO TURN THE SUSPICION BACK ON TO ME. I MUST BE PATIENT.
COULD I ASK WHAT HAPPENED IN ROOM 1008 VIA MOTHER'S GUARD, WHO WAS SPYING ON EIGHTH PRINCE SALE-SALE...?
AT THIS POINT, CAMILLA FINDING OUT WILL BE INEVITABLE. FINDING OUT THE CAUSE OF DEATH AND THE SITUATION IN THE ROOM COME AS A SET! I CAN TALK TO MOTHER MYSELF...
IT'S TOO RISKY TO CONTACT THE SECOND QUEEN'S SOLDIERS MYSELF! MOTHER WOULD NEVER MAKE A DECISION WITHOUT TALKING TO CAMILLA. IF I GET THE OKAY, I SHOULD ASSUME CAMILLA IS IN ON IT!
I CAN'T EXPECT MAOR TO DEFEND AGAINST NEN YET... I ***NEED*** A PARTNER...! ***I NEED KURAPIKA!!***
DAY 10, 11:30 A.M.
VMM
RRRRMMMMM
A ***FOURTH*** RUMBLING OF AURA!
THE INTERVALS ARE GETTING SHORTER...?!

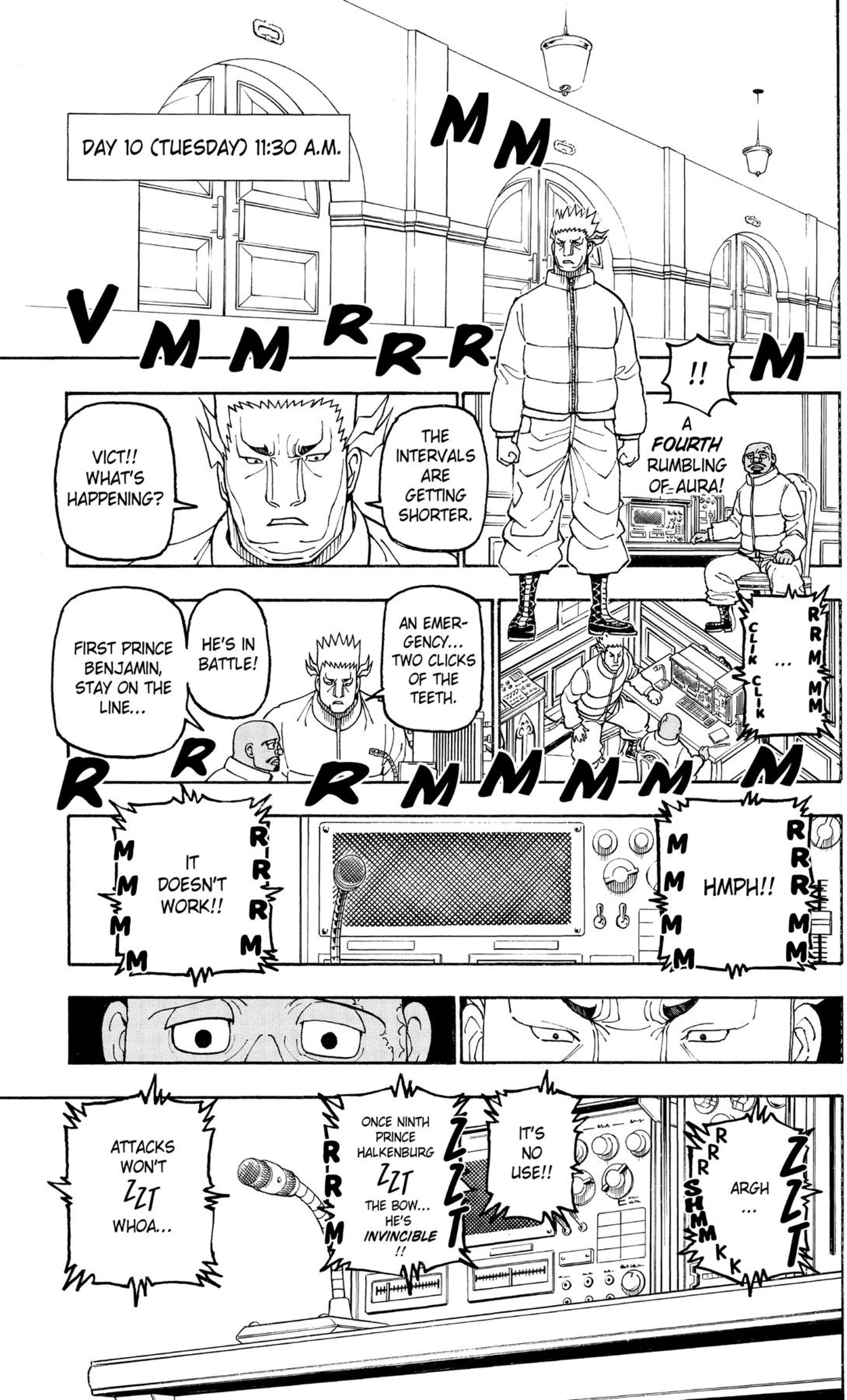
Chapter 389: Curse

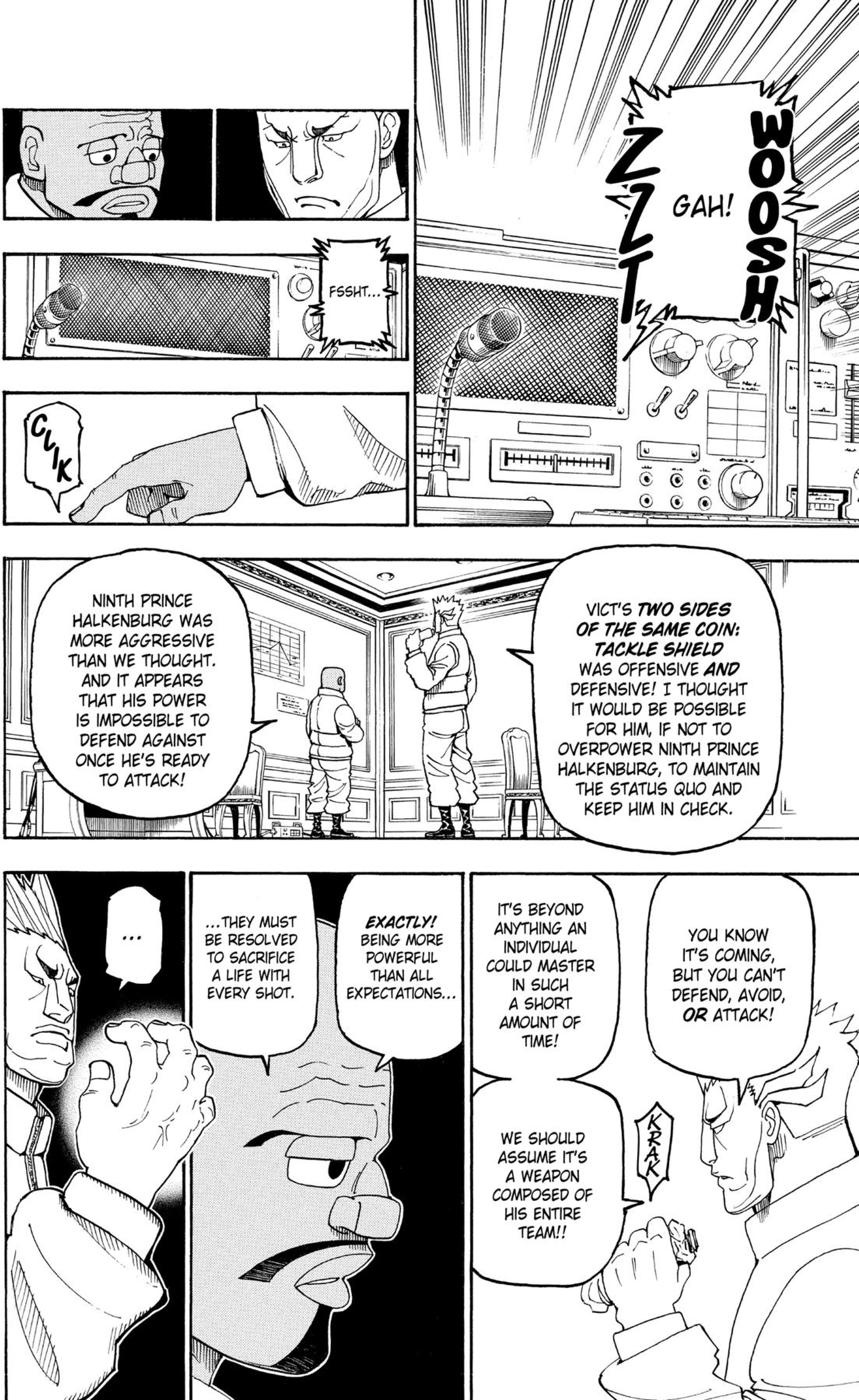

When Shikaku killed himself, I was in the master bedroom with five others.
They were Seventh Prince Luzurus, his guard Bharate, Hunters Ridge and Basho, and the Second Queen's guard Famule.
Seventh Prince Luzurus was watching a movie while doing legal drugs, as usual.
Until the shot was fired, we were wary of the rumbling. Shikaku, who was at the door, was not on our radar.
According to Rice, who talked to him, Shikaku shouted, "Long live First Prince Benjamin," and shot himself in the temple...
...
The rumbling stopped the moment the shot was fired.
From this I'm sure that an ability on Ninth Prince Halkenburg's side and Shikaku's suicide must be linked.
I hate to say it, but given the circumstances ...
...The possibility is strong that a forced suicide was used as currency in a deal.
Are you saying he chose to die in exchange...
...for sparing my life?
...
That rumble was indicative of an emitter ability. Simply converting into destructive force, I estimate it as equivalent to a supersonic fireball five meters in diameter.
A direct hit would be fatal whether or not you have Nen!

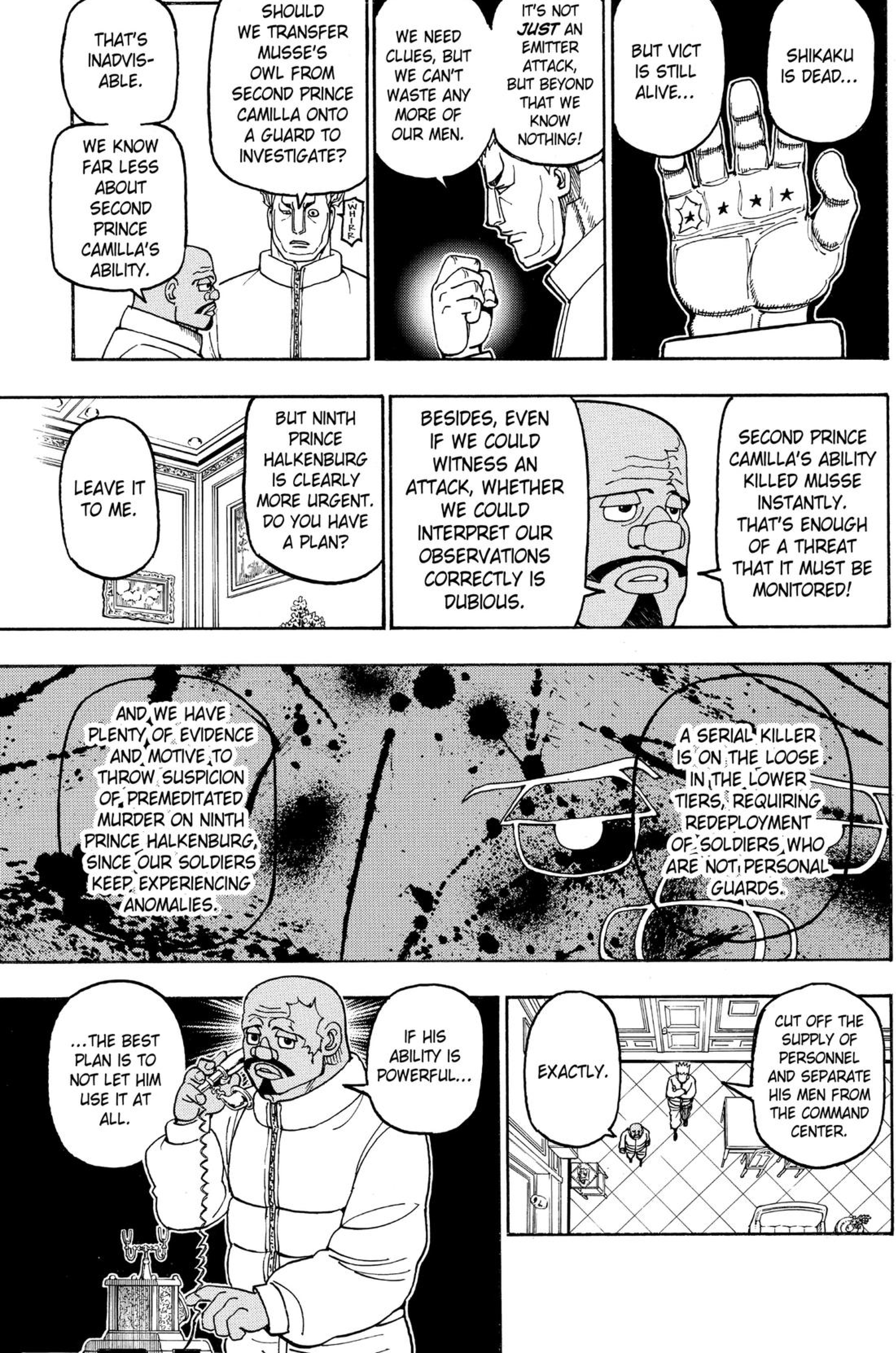

KANJIDOL, I AGREE WITH YOUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT...
...BUT I HAVE THREE PROBLEMS WITH YOUR THEORY.
THREE?
WHAT ARE THEY?
FIRST, IF THAT RUMBLING WAS IN PREPARATION TO FIRE AN EMITTER ATTACK...
...DID SHIKAKU REALLY THINK NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG WOULD ATTACK?
...
WE'RE CURRENTLY IN DETENTION, UNDER SURVEILLANCE IN THE VVIP AREA. ASSUMING NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG KNEW THIS VIA SHIKAKU OR THE QUEEN, HE'D NEED TO ATTACK THE LOWER-RANKED PRINCES TO REACH US.
VVIP AREA
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
IT'S OUT OF CHARACTER FOR HIM TO FORCE A SUICIDE OR SACRIFICE THE LOWER-RANKED PRINCES AS COLLATERAL DAMAGE! EVEN IF HE'S HAD A CHANGE OF HEART AND DECIDED TO AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE THE SUCCESSION BATTLE, THIS IS TOO GREAT A CHANGE TOO QUICKLY.
TRUE...

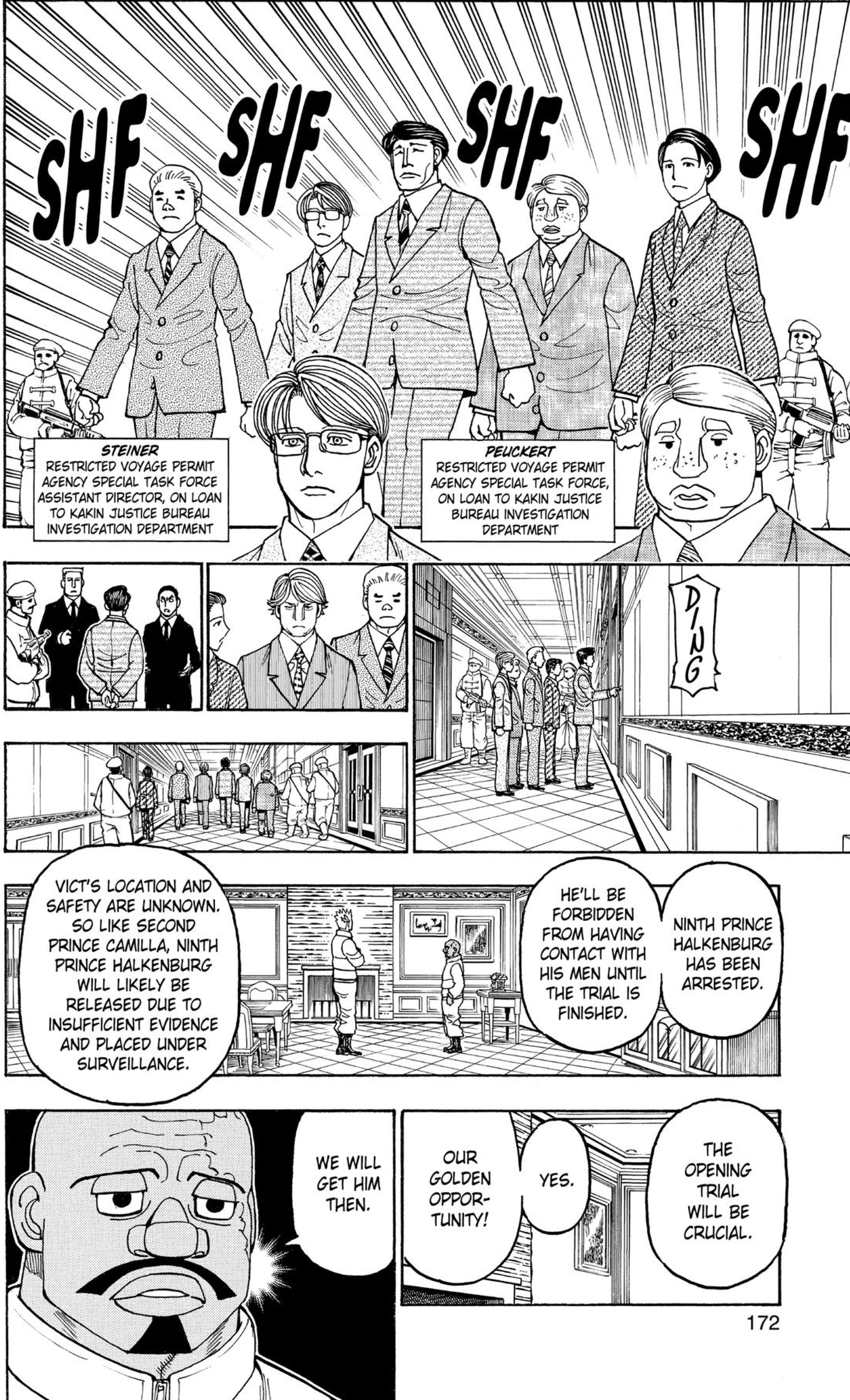

TWO.
WHY SUICIDE?
IF THEY'RE GIVING HIM AN ORDER, WHY NOT ASSASSINATE ANOTHER PRINCE?
URK!
ALSO TRUE.
AND THREE...
...*CAN* PRINCES KILL EACH OTHER?
HUH...?
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN AND I ARE OF THE OPINION THAT IF THE NEN BEASTS COULD KILL EACH OTHER, OR THE PRINCES, THIS WOULD'VE BEEN OVER ALREADY.
A NEN BEAST WITH FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN'S TEMPERAMENT WOULD'VE DONE EITHER OR BOTH!
THIS MEANS NEN BEASTS DON'T KILL EACH OTHER AND THEY DON'T DIRECTLY KILL OTHER PRINCES!!
THOSE MUST BE THE GROUND RULES.
...
I SEE...
AND EVERYONE KNOWS THAT KILLING A ROYAL IS A CAPITAL OFFENSE—EVEN FOR A PRINCE!
THEN IT'S NATURAL TO ASSUME THEIR NEN BEASTS WILL ALSO BE BEHOLDEN TO THAT LAW.
WE KNOW NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG COULDN'T USE NEN BEFORE BOARDING THIS SHIP. IF THAT ABILITY WAS HIS NEN BEAST'S, TARGETING THE FIRST PRINCE WOULD RUN COUNTER TO ITS INSTINCTS. EVEN IF *THE PRINCE* GAINED THE ABILITY THROUGH THE NEN BEAST...
...THE NEN BEAST WOULD NEVER SUPPORT AN ABILITY THAT COULD DIRECTLY KILL A PRINCE!

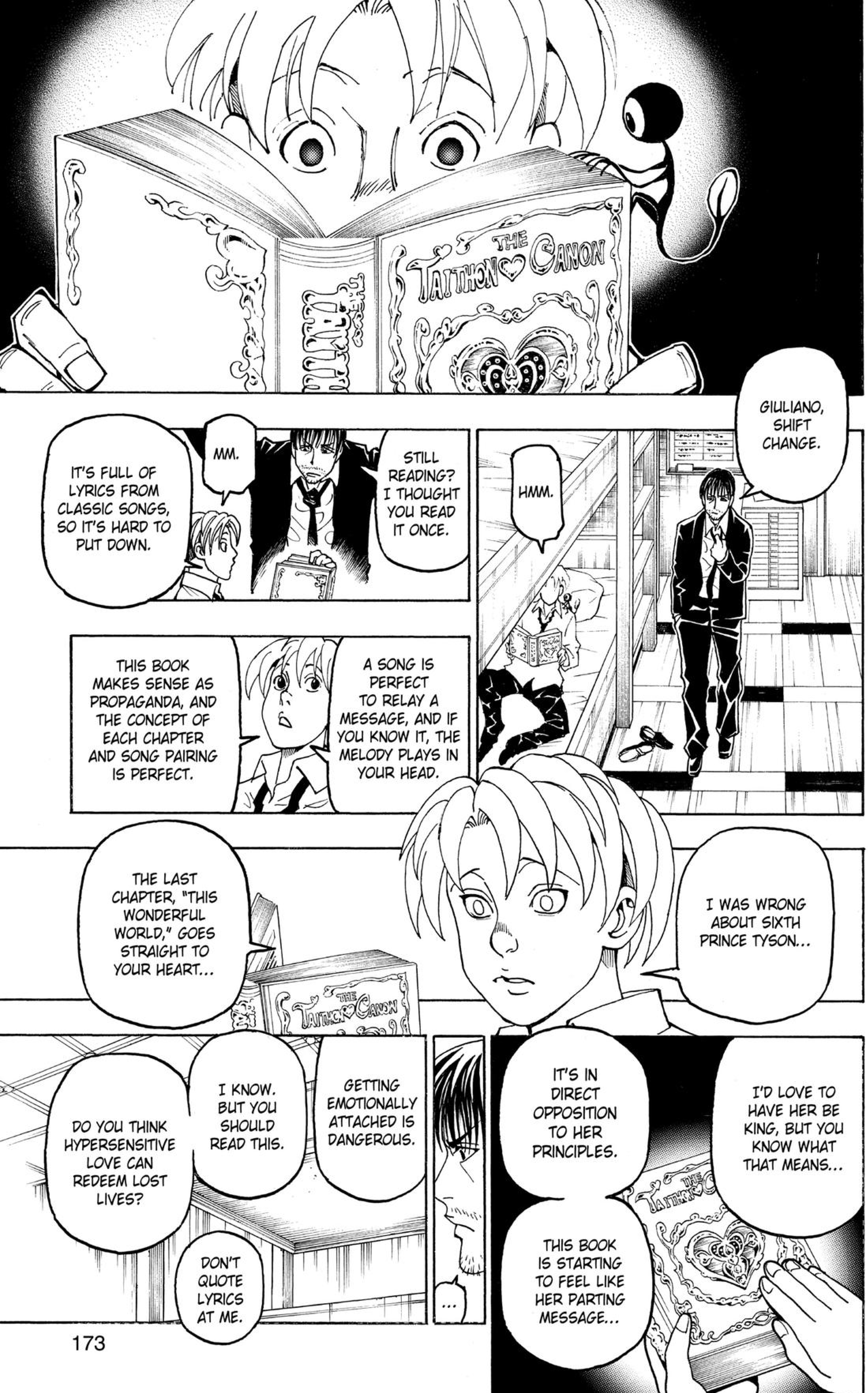

I DIDN'T...
...THINK THAT FAR.
DOESN'T THAT MEAN SHIKAKU WAS MANIPULATED?
THAT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY HE COMMITTED SUICIDE.
AND SHIKAKU WAS A MANIPULATOR. HE WAS AWARE OF THE COUNTERMEASURES.
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.
SHIKAKU WOULD MANIPULATE ***HIMSELF*** FIRST, TO BLOCK THE ENEMY'S ABILITY!
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT WAS POSSIBLE...
IT'S THE CRUX OF BEING A MANIPULATOR. MANY ARE UNAWARE OF THIS.
RIHAN MAY NOT KNOW EITHER... I MIGHT HAVE TO GIVE UP ON THE IDEA OF HIM WORKING ON NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG...
THEN WHY DID SHIKAKU KILL HIMSELF?
AND THE KEY TO ***THAT*** QUESTION...
WHY DID HE DIE IN FRONT OF ROOM 1007...?
!
THE MISSION HAS BECOME MORE DELICATE AND REQUIRES YOUR FULL ATTENTION, KANJIDOL!!
YOU MUST REMEMBER ALL THE DETAILS!! AND OBSERVE CLOSELY WHAT THEY DO IN ROOM 1007 FROM NOW ON TO FIGURE OUT THE "WHY"!!
DAY 9 (MONDAY) 10:00 A.M.

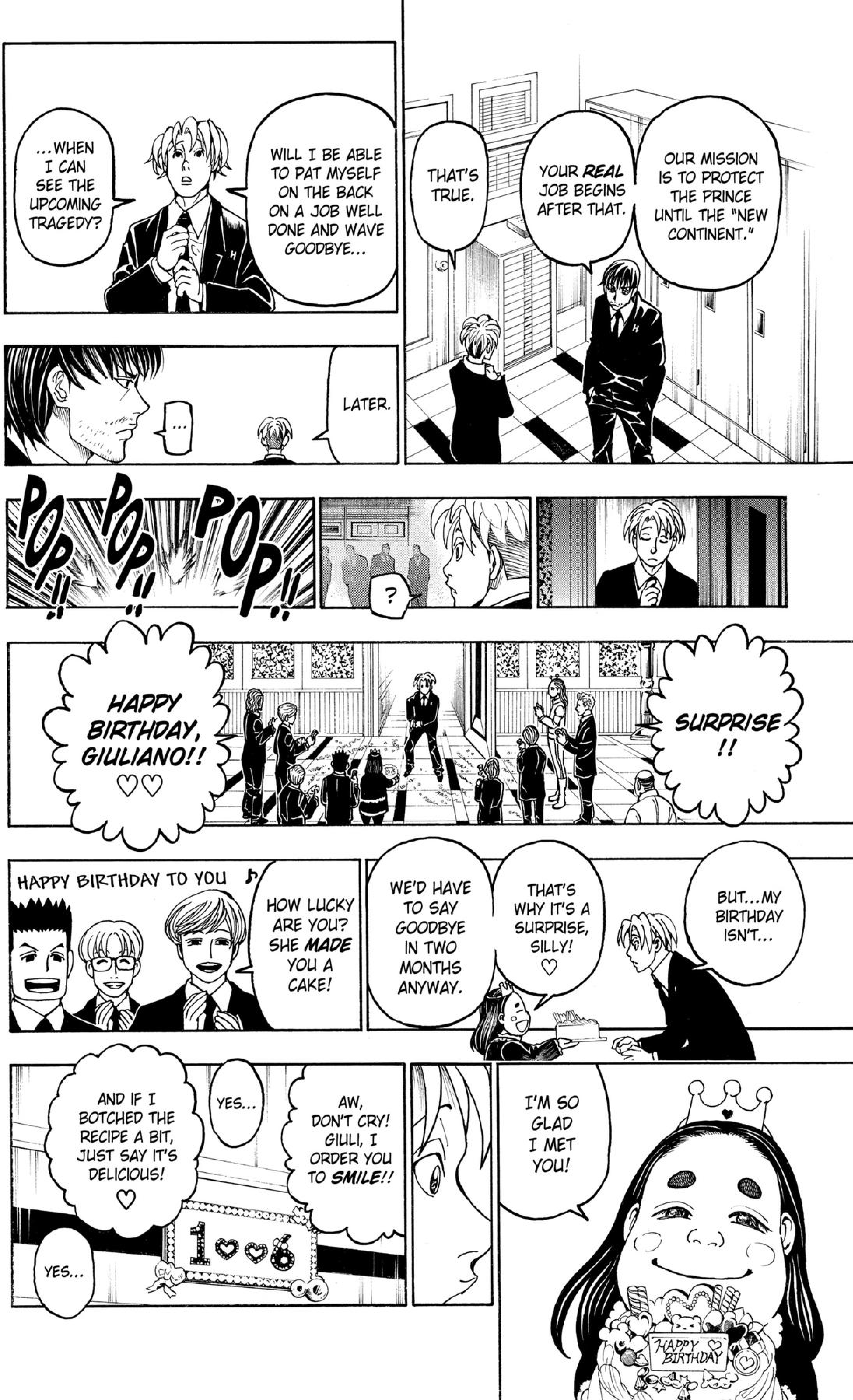

DAY 10 (TUESDAY) 11:30 A.M.
MM
VMMRRRM
!!
A FOURTH RUMBLING OF AURA!
THE INTERVALS ARE GETTING SHORTER.
VICT!! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
CLIK CLIK
RRMMM
...
AN EMERGENCY... TWO CLICKS OF THE TEETH.
HE'S IN BATTLE!
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN, STAY ON THE LINE...
RRRMMMMMM
RRRMM
MMMMM
HMPH!!
RRRM
MMMM
IT DOESN'T WORK!!
ZZT
RRSHMMKK
ARGH...
IT'S NO USE!!
ZZT
ONCE NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG ZZT THE BOW... HE'S INVINCIBLE!!
RRRM
ATTACKS WON'T ZZT WHOA...

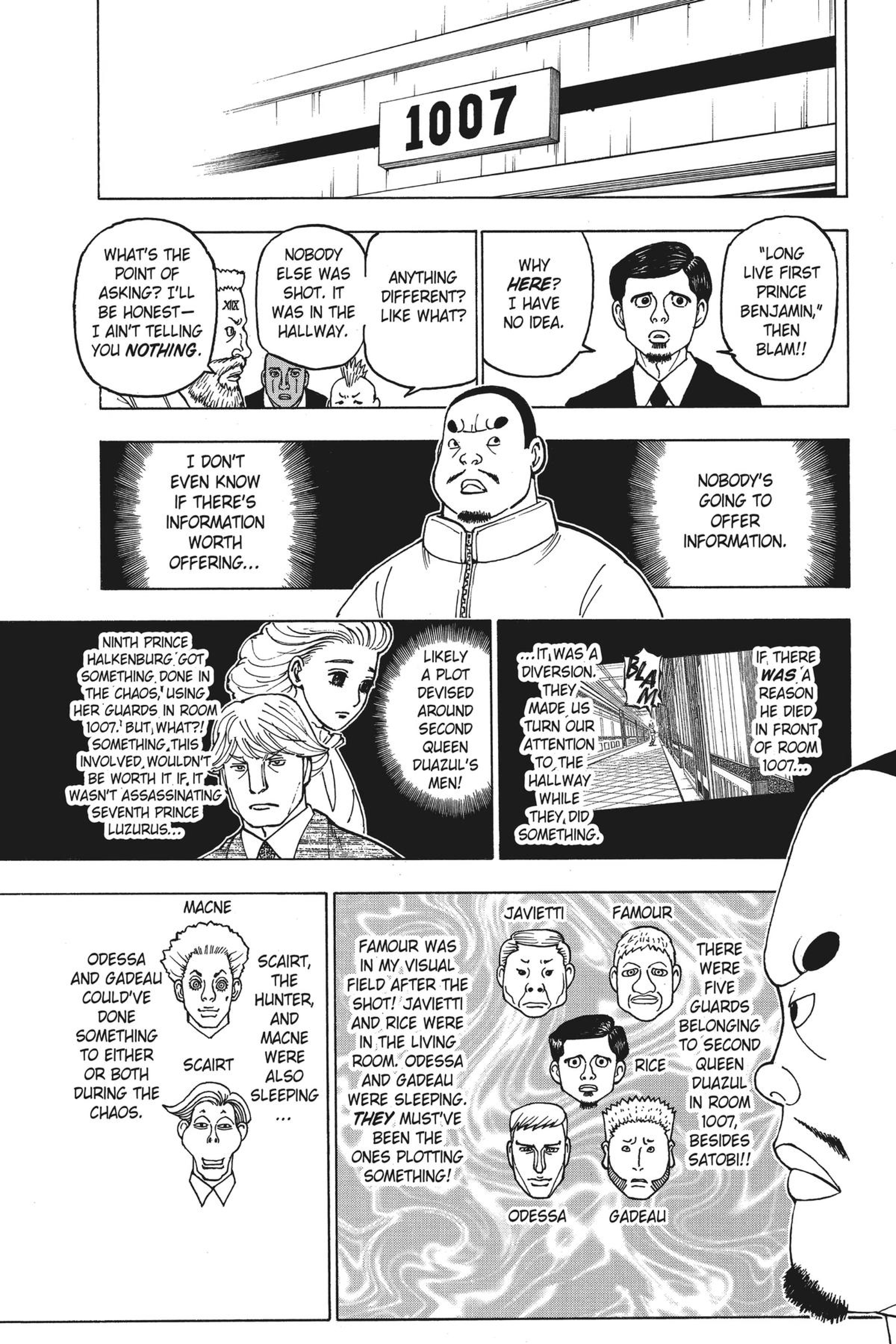

WOOSH
ZZT
GAH!
FSSHT...
CLIK
VICT'S ***TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN: TACKLE SHIELD*** WAS OFFENSIVE ***AND*** DEFENSIVE! I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR HIM, IF NOT TO OVERPOWER NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG, TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO AND KEEP HIM IN CHECK.
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG WAS MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN WE THOUGHT. AND IT APPEARS THAT HIS POWER IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFEND AGAINST ONCE HE'S READY TO ATTACK!
YOU KNOW IT'S COMING, BUT YOU CAN'T DEFEND, AVOID, ***OR*** ATTACK!
IT'S BEYOND ANYTHING AN INDIVIDUAL COULD MASTER IN SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME!
KRAK
WE SHOULD ASSUME IT'S A WEAPON COMPOSED OF HIS ENTIRE TEAM!!
EXACTLY! BEING MORE POWERFUL THAN ALL EXPECTATIONS...
...THEY MUST BE RESOLVED TO SACRIFICE A LIFE WITH EVERY SHOT.
...

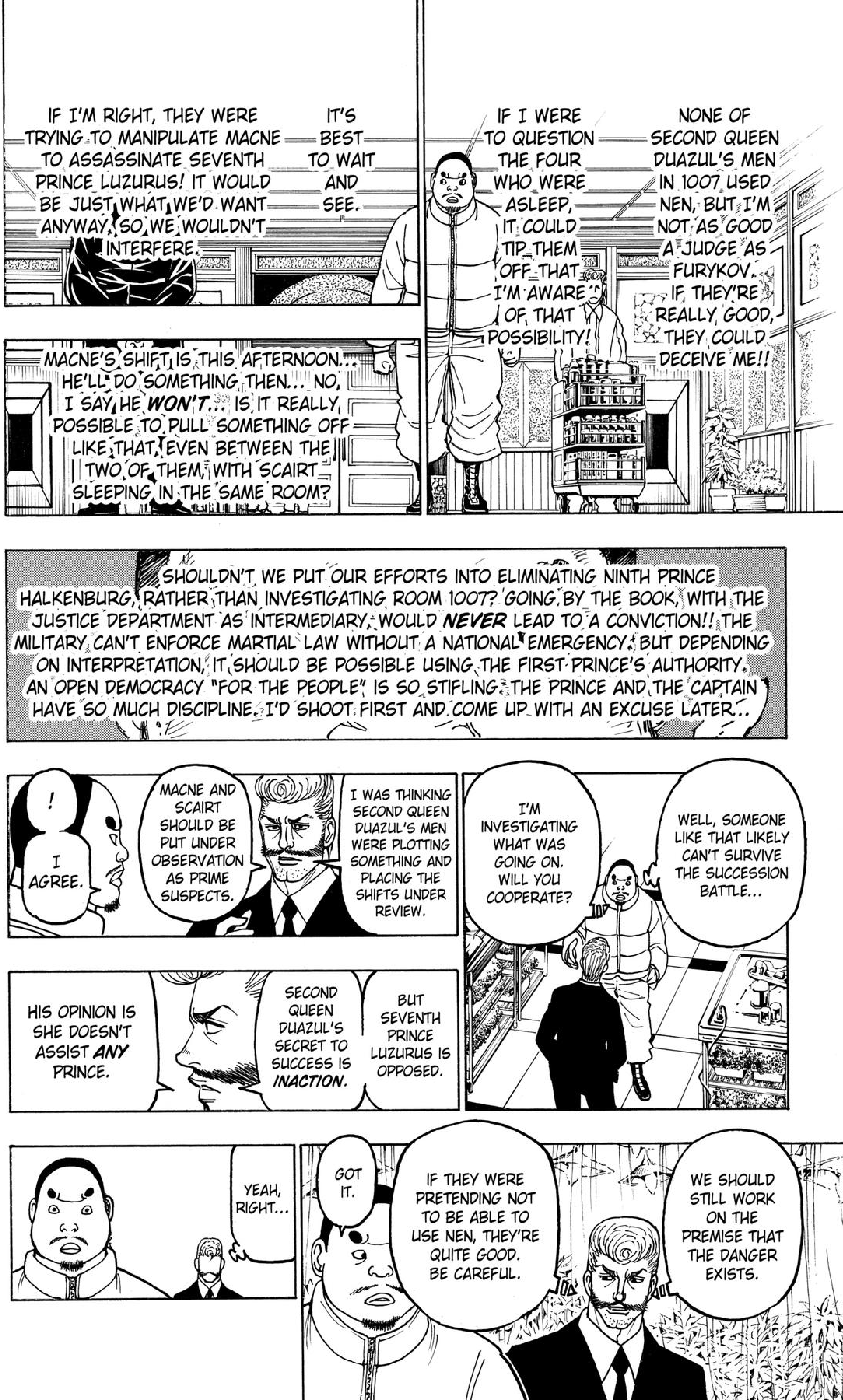

SHIKAKU IS DEAD...
BUT VICT IS STILL ALIVE...
IT'S NOT *JUST* AN EMITTER ATTACK, BUT BEYOND THAT WE KNOW NOTHING!
WE NEED CLUES, BUT WE CAN'T WASTE ANY MORE OF OUR MEN.
WHIRR
SHOULD WE TRANSFER MUSSE'S OWL FROM SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA ONTO A GUARD TO INVESTIGATE?
THAT'S INADVISABLE.
WE KNOW FAR LESS ABOUT SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA'S ABILITY.
SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA'S ABILITY KILLED MUSSE INSTANTLY. THAT'S ENOUGH OF A THREAT THAT IT MUST BE MONITORED!
BESIDES, EVEN IF WE COULD WITNESS AN ATTACK, WHETHER WE COULD INTERPRET OUR OBSERVATIONS CORRECTLY IS DUBIOUS.
BUT NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG IS CLEARLY MORE URGENT. DO YOU HAVE A PLAN?
LEAVE IT TO ME.
A SERIAL KILLER IS ON THE LOOSE IN THE LOWER TIERS, REQUIRING REDEPLOYMENT OF SOLDIERS WHO ARE NOT PERSONAL GUARDS.
AND WE HAVE PLENTY OF EVIDENCE AND MOTIVE TO THROW SUSPICION OF PREMEDITATED MURDER ON NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG, SINCE OUR SOLDIERS KEEP EXPERIENCING ANOMALIES.
CUT OFF THE SUPPLY OF PERSONNEL AND SEPARATE HIS MEN FROM THE COMMAND CENTER.
EXACTLY.
IF HIS ABILITY IS POWERFUL...
...THE BEST PLAN IS TO NOT LET HIM USE IT AT ALL.]

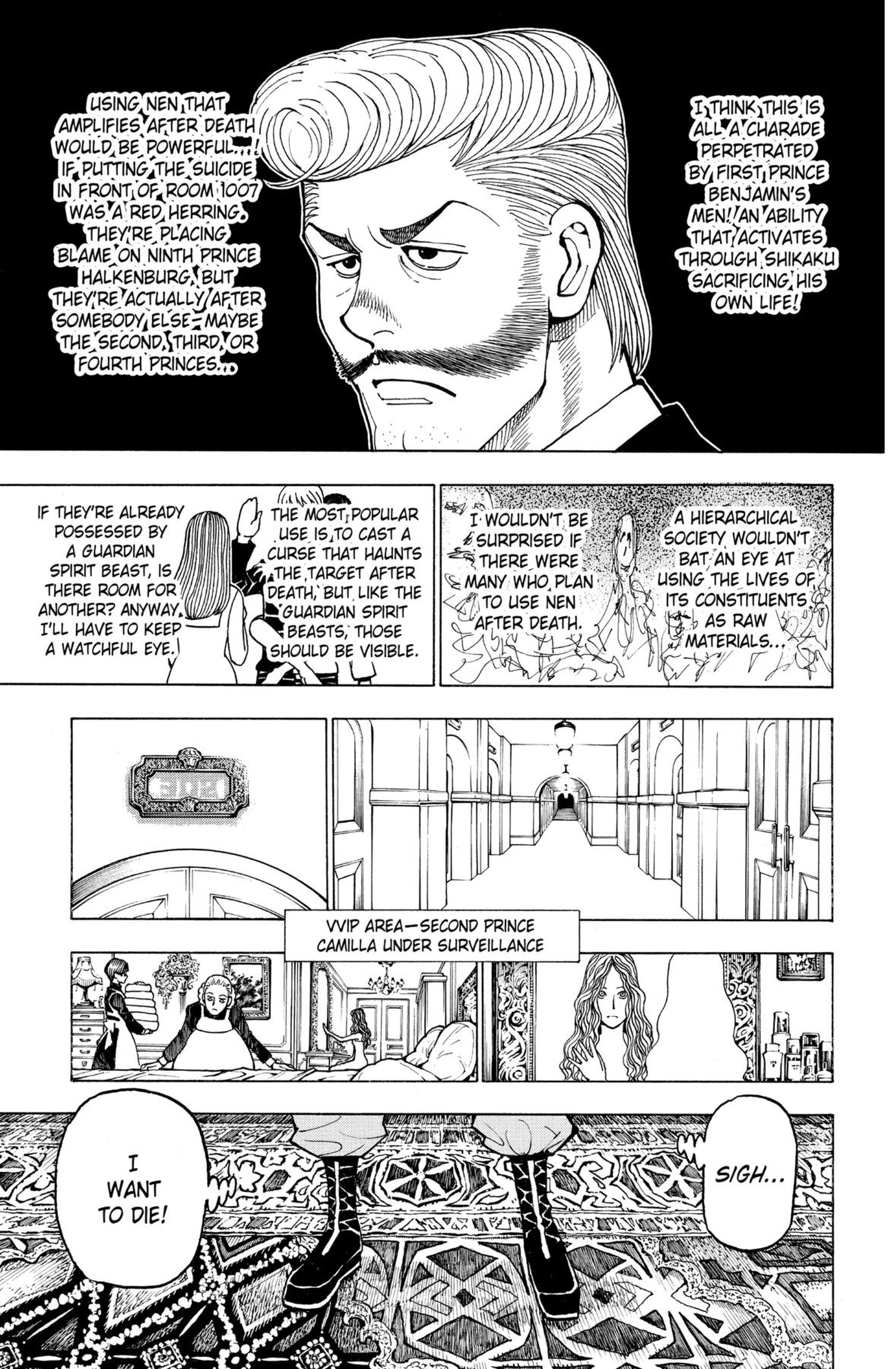

SHF
SHF
SHF
SHF
PEUCKERT RESTRICTED VOYAGE PERMIT AGENCY SPECIAL TASK FORCE, ON LOAN TO KAKIN JUSTICE BUREAU INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT
STEINER RESTRICTED VOYAGE PERMIT AGENCY SPECIAL TASK FORCE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ON LOAN TO KAKIN JUSTICE BUREAU INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT
DING
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG HAS BEEN ARRESTED.
HE'LL BE FORBIDDEN FROM HAVING CONTACT WITH HIS MEN UNTIL THE TRIAL IS FINISHED.
VICT'S LOCATION AND SAFETY ARE UNKNOWN. SO LIKE SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA, NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG WILL LIKELY BE RELEASED DUE TO INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AND PLACED UNDER SURVEILLANCE.
THE OPENING TRIAL WILL BE CRUCIAL.
YES.
OUR GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!
WE WILL GET HIM THEN.

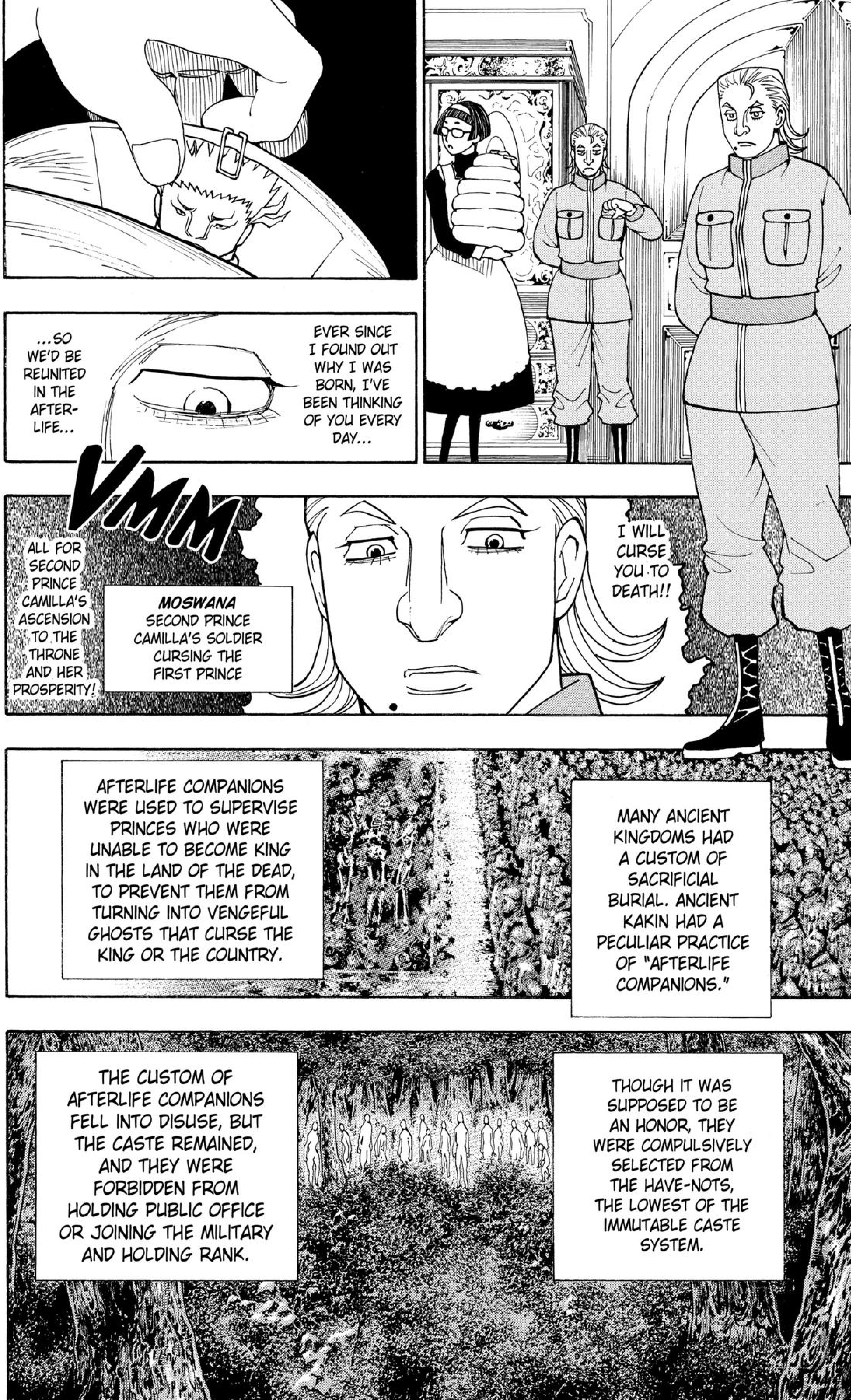

THE TAITHON CANON
GIULIANO, SHIFT CHANGE.
HMM.
STILL READING? I THOUGHT YOU READ IT ONCE.
MM.
IT'S FULL OF LYRICS FROM CLASSIC SONGS, SO IT'S HARD TO PUT DOWN.
A SONG IS PERFECT TO RELAY A MESSAGE, AND IF YOU KNOW IT, THE MELODY PLAYS IN YOUR HEAD.
THIS BOOK MAKES SENSE AS PROPAGANDA, AND THE CONCEPT OF EACH CHAPTER AND SONG PAIRING IS PERFECT.
I WAS WRONG ABOUT SIXTH PRINCE TYSON...
THE LAST CHAPTER, "THIS WONDERFUL WORLD," GOES STRAIGHT TO YOUR HEART...
THE TAITHON CANON
I'D LOVE TO HAVE HER BE KING, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS...
IT'S IN DIRECT OPPOSITION TO HER PRINCIPLES.
THIS BOOK IS STARTING TO FEEL LIKE HER PARTING MESSAGE...
...
GETTING EMOTIONALLY ATTACHED IS DANGEROUS.
I KNOW. BUT YOU SHOULD READ THIS.
DO YOU THINK HYPERSENSITIVE LOVE CAN REDEEM LOST LIVES?
DON'T QUOTE LYRICS AT ME.

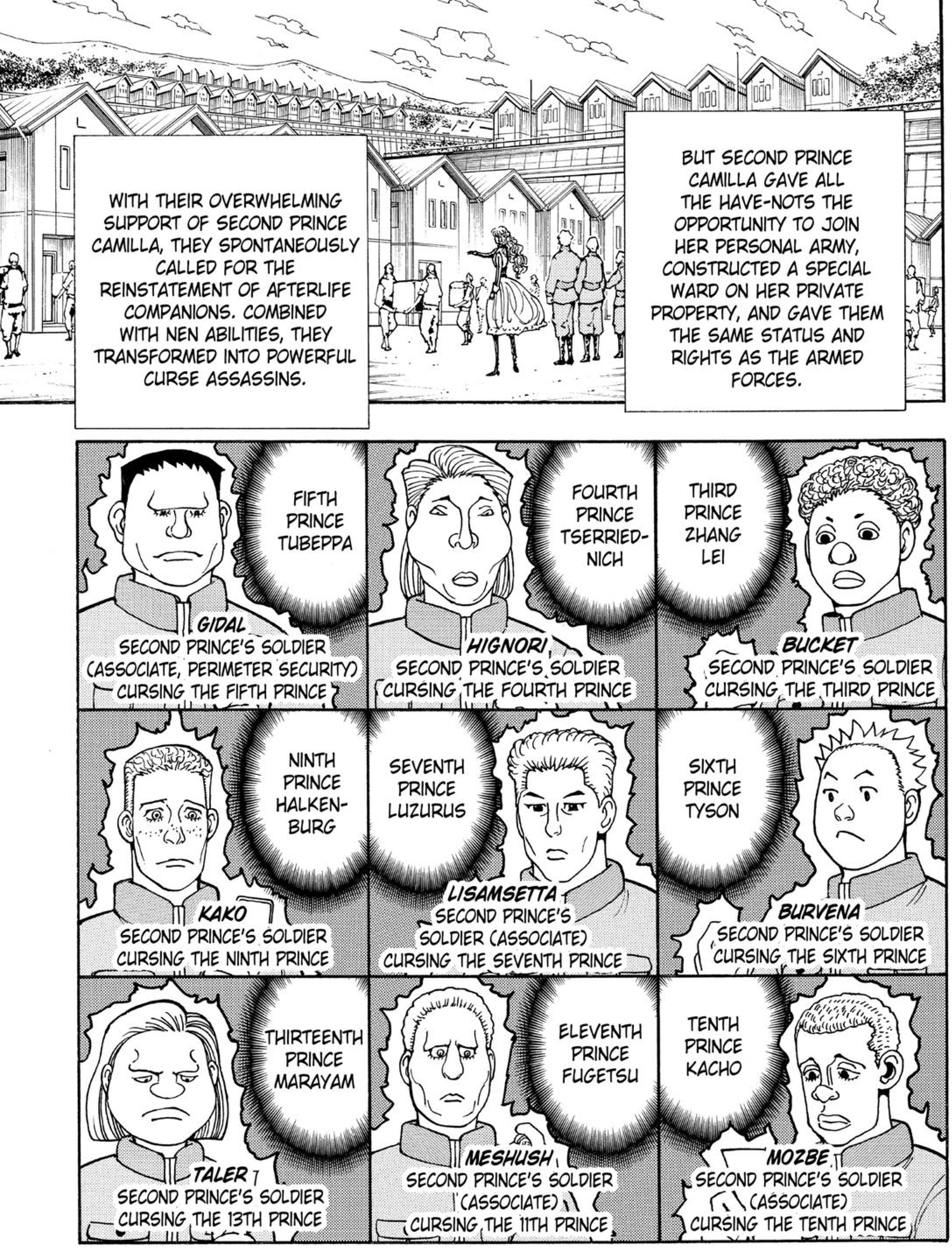

OUR MISSION IS TO PROTECT THE PRINCE UNTIL THE "NEW CONTINENT."
YOUR *REAL* JOB BEGINS AFTER THAT.
THAT'S TRUE.
WILL I BE ABLE TO PAT MYSELF ON THE BACK ON A JOB WELL DONE AND WAVE GOODBYE...
...WHEN I CAN SEE THE UPCOMING TRAGEDY?
LATER.
...
?
POP!!
POP!!
POP!!
SURPRISE!!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, GIULIANO!! ♡♡
BUT...MY BIRTHDAY ISN'T...
THAT'S WHY IT'S A SURPRISE, SILLY! ♡
WE'D HAVE TO SAY GOODBYE IN TWO MONTHS ANYWAY.
HOW LUCKY ARE YOU? SHE *MADE* YOU A CAKE!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU ♪
I'M SO GLAD I MET YOU!
HAPPY ♡ BIRTHDAY
AW, DON'T CRY! GIULI, I ORDER YOU TO *SMILE!!*
YES...
AND IF I BOTCHED THE RECIPE A BIT, JUST SAY IT'S DELICIOUS! ♡
YES...
1♡6


1007
"LONG LIVE FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN," THEN BLAM!!
WHY *HERE*? I HAVE NO IDEA.
ANYTHING DIFFERENT? LIKE WHAT?
NOBODY ELSE WAS SHOT. IT WAS IN THE HALLWAY.
WHAT'S THE POINT OF ASKING? I'LL BE HONEST— I AIN'T TELLING YOU ***NOTHING***.
NOBODY'S GOING TO OFFER INFORMATION.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THERE'S INFORMATION WORTH OFFERING...
IF THERE ***WAS*** A REASON HE DIED IN FRONT OF ROOM 1007...
BLAM
...IT WAS A DIVERSION. THEY MADE US TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE HALLWAY WHILE THEY DID SOMETHING.
LIKELY A PLOT DEVISED AROUND SECOND QUEEN DUAZUL'S MEN!
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG GOT SOMETHING DONE IN THE CHAOS, USING HER GUARDS IN ROOM 1007. BUT WHAT?! SOMETHING THIS INVOLVED WOULDN'T BE WORTH IT IF IT WASN'T ASSASSINATING SEVENTH PRINCE LUZURUS...
THERE WERE FIVE GUARDS BELONGING TO SECOND QUEEN DUAZUL IN ROOM 1007, BESIDES SATOBI!!
FAMOUR
JAVIETTI
RICE
GADEAU
ODESSA
FAMOUR WAS IN MY VISUAL FIELD AFTER THE SHOT! JAVIETTI AND RICE WERE IN THE LIVING ROOM. ODESSA AND GADEAU WERE SLEEPING. ***THEY*** MUST'VE BEEN THE ONES PLOTTING SOMETHING!
SCAIRT, THE HUNTER, AND MACNE WERE ALSO SLEEPING...
MACNE
SCAIRT
ODESSA AND GADEAU COULD'VE DONE SOMETHING TO EITHER OR BOTH DURING THE CHAOS.

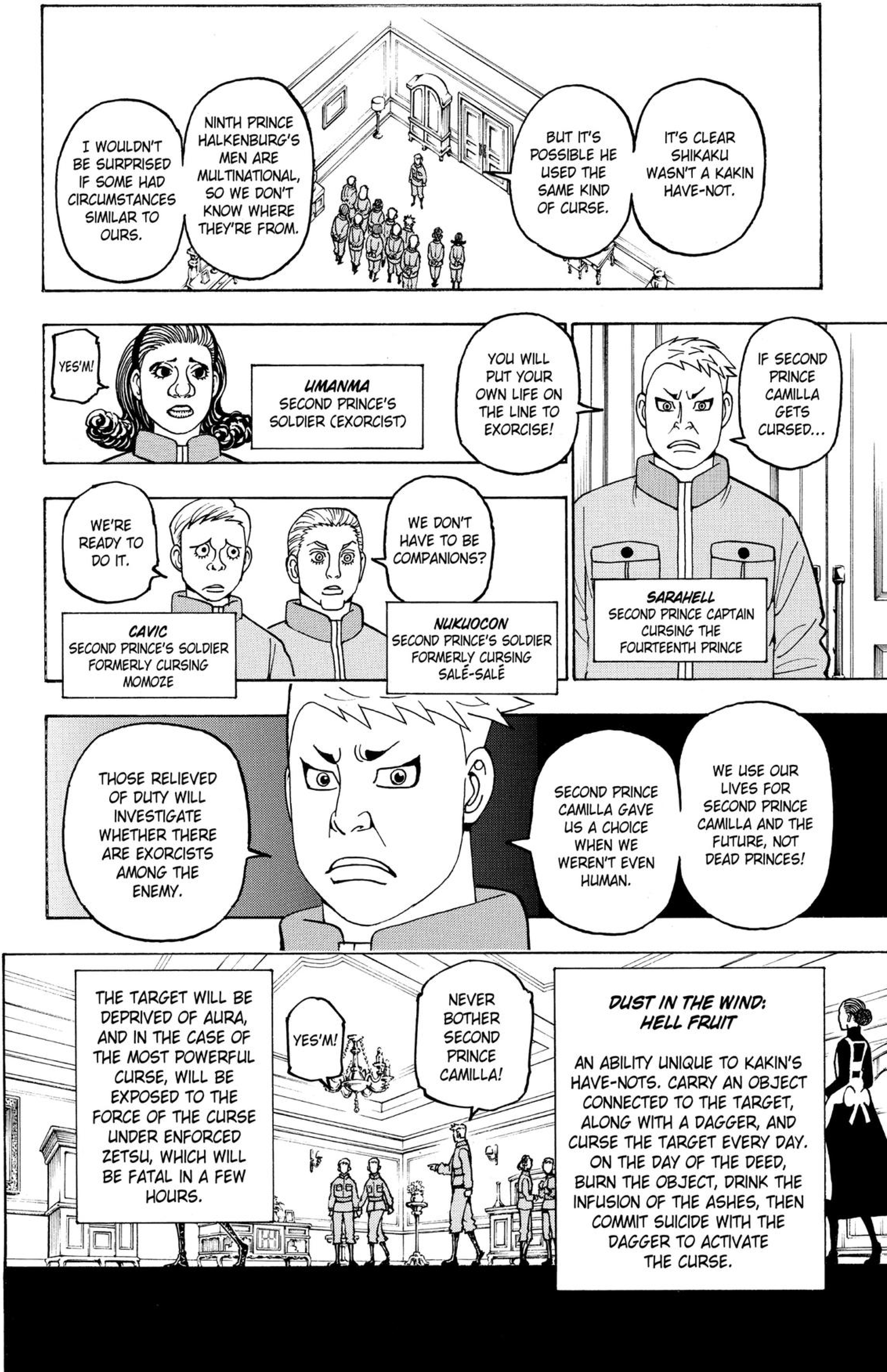

NONE OF SECOND QUEEN DUAZUL'S MEN IN 1007 USED NEN, BUT I'M NOT AS GOOD A JUDGE AS FURYKOV. IF THEY'RE REALLY GOOD, THEY COULD DECEIVE ME!!
IF I WERE TO QUESTION THE FOUR WHO WERE ASLEEP, IT COULD TIP THEM OFF THAT I'M AWARE OF THAT POSSIBILITY!
IF I'M RIGHT, THEY WERE TRYING TO MANIPULATE MACNE TO ASSASSINATE SEVENTH PRINCE LUZURUS! IT WOULD BE JUST WHAT WE'D WANT ANYWAY, SO WE WOULDN'T INTERFERE.
IT'S BEST TO WAIT AND SEE.
MACNE'S SHIFT IS THIS AFTERNOON... HE'LL DO SOMETHING THEN... NO, I SAY HE *WON'T*... IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO PULL SOMETHING OFF LIKE THAT, EVEN BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM, WITH SCAIRT SLEEPING IN THE SAME ROOM?
SHOULDN'T WE PUT OUR EFFORTS INTO ELIMINATING NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG, RATHER THAN INVESTIGATING ROOM 1007? GOING BY THE BOOK, WITH THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AS INTERMEDIARY, WOULD *NEVER* LEAD TO A CONVICTION!! THE MILITARY CAN'T ENFORCE MARTIAL LAW WITHOUT A NATIONAL EMERGENCY, BUT DEPENDING ON INTERPRETATION, IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE USING THE FIRST PRINCE'S AUTHORITY. AN OPEN DEMOCRACY "FOR THE PEOPLE" IS SO STIFLING. THE PRINCE AND THE CAPTAIN HAVE SO MUCH DISCIPLINE. I'D SHOOT FIRST AND COME UP WITH AN EXCUSE LATER...
WELL, SOMEONE LIKE THAT LIKELY CAN'T SURVIVE THE SUCCESSION BATTLE...
I'M INVESTIGATING WHAT WAS GOING ON. WILL YOU COOPERATE?
I WAS THINKING SECOND QUEEN DUAZUL'S MEN WERE PLOTTING SOMETHING AND PLACING THE SHIFTS UNDER REVIEW.
MACNE AND SCAIRT SHOULD BE PUT UNDER OBSERVATION AS PRIME SUSPECTS.
!
I AGREE.
BUT SEVENTH PRINCE LUZURUS IS OPPOSED.
SECOND QUEEN DUAZUL'S SECRET TO SUCCESS IS *INACTION*.
HIS OPINION IS SHE DOESN'T ASSIST *ANY* PRINCE.
WE SHOULD STILL WORK ON THE PREMISE THAT THE DANGER EXISTS.
IF THEY WERE PRETENDING NOT TO BE ABLE TO USE NEN, THEY'RE QUITE GOOD. BE CAREFUL.
GOT IT.
YEAH, RIGHT...

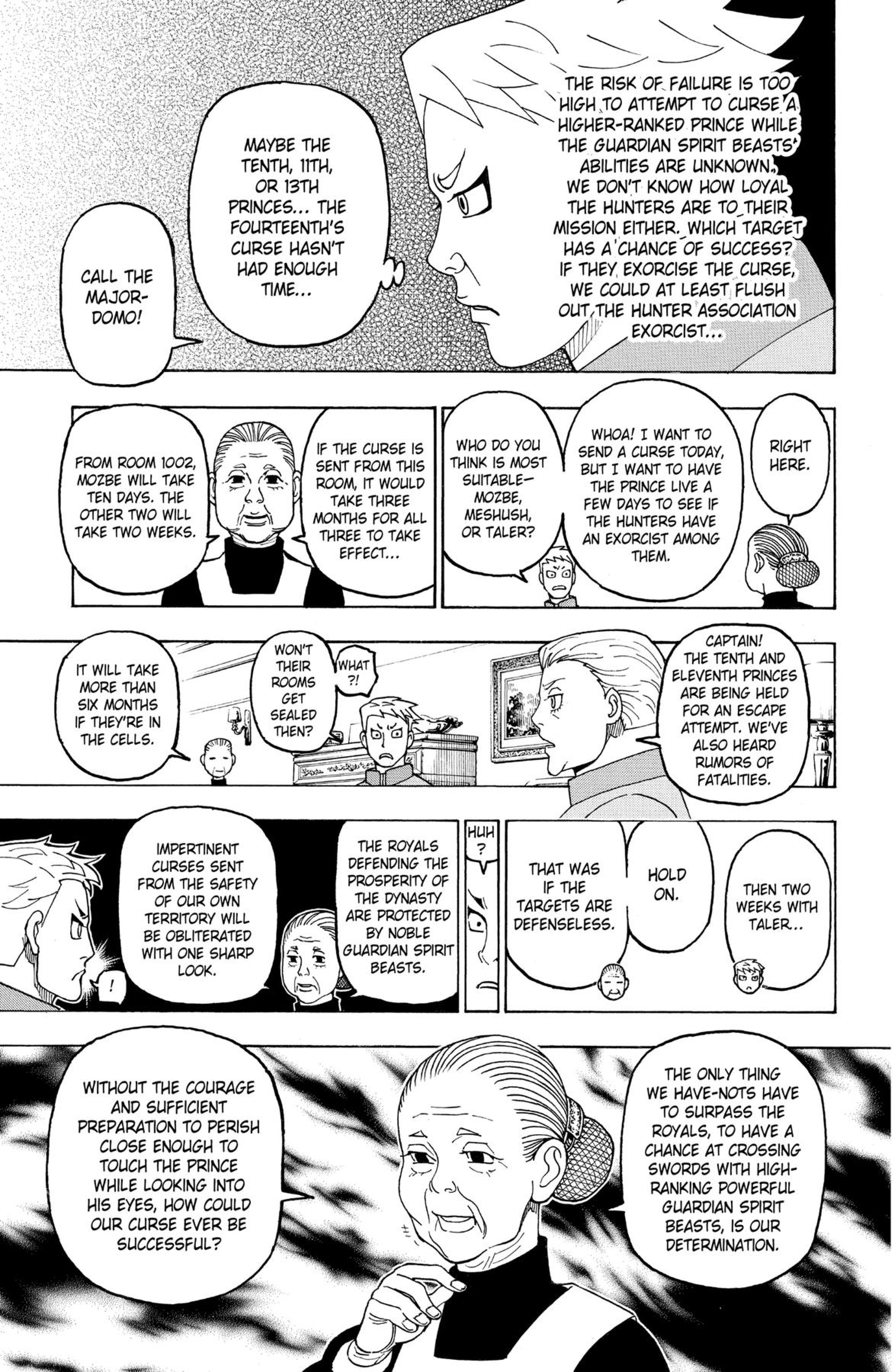

I THINK THIS IS ALL A CHARADE PERPETRATED BY FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN'S MEN! AN ABILITY THAT ACTIVATES THROUGH SHIKAKU SACRIFICING HIS OWN LIFE!
USING NEN THAT AMPLIFIES AFTER DEATH WOULD BE POWERFUL...! IF PUTTING THE SUICIDE IN FRONT OF ROOM 1007 WAS A RED HERRING. THEY'RE PLACING BLAME ON NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG, BUT THEY'RE ACTUALLY AFTER SOMEBODY ELSE—MAYBE THE SECOND, THIRD, OR FOURTH PRINCES...
A HIERARCHICAL SOCIETY WOULDN'T BAT AN EYE AT USING THE LIVES OF ITS CONSTITUENTS AS RAW MATERIALS...
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THERE WERE MANY WHO PLAN TO USE NEN AFTER DEATH.
THE MOST POPULAR USE IS TO CAST A CURSE THAT HAUNTS THE TARGET AFTER DEATH, BUT LIKE THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEASTS, THOSE SHOULD BE VISIBLE.
IF THEY'RE ALREADY POSSESSED BY A GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST, IS THERE ROOM FOR ANOTHER? ANYWAY, I'LL HAVE TO KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE.
VVIP AREA—SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA UNDER SURVEILLANCE
SIGH...
I WANT TO DIE!

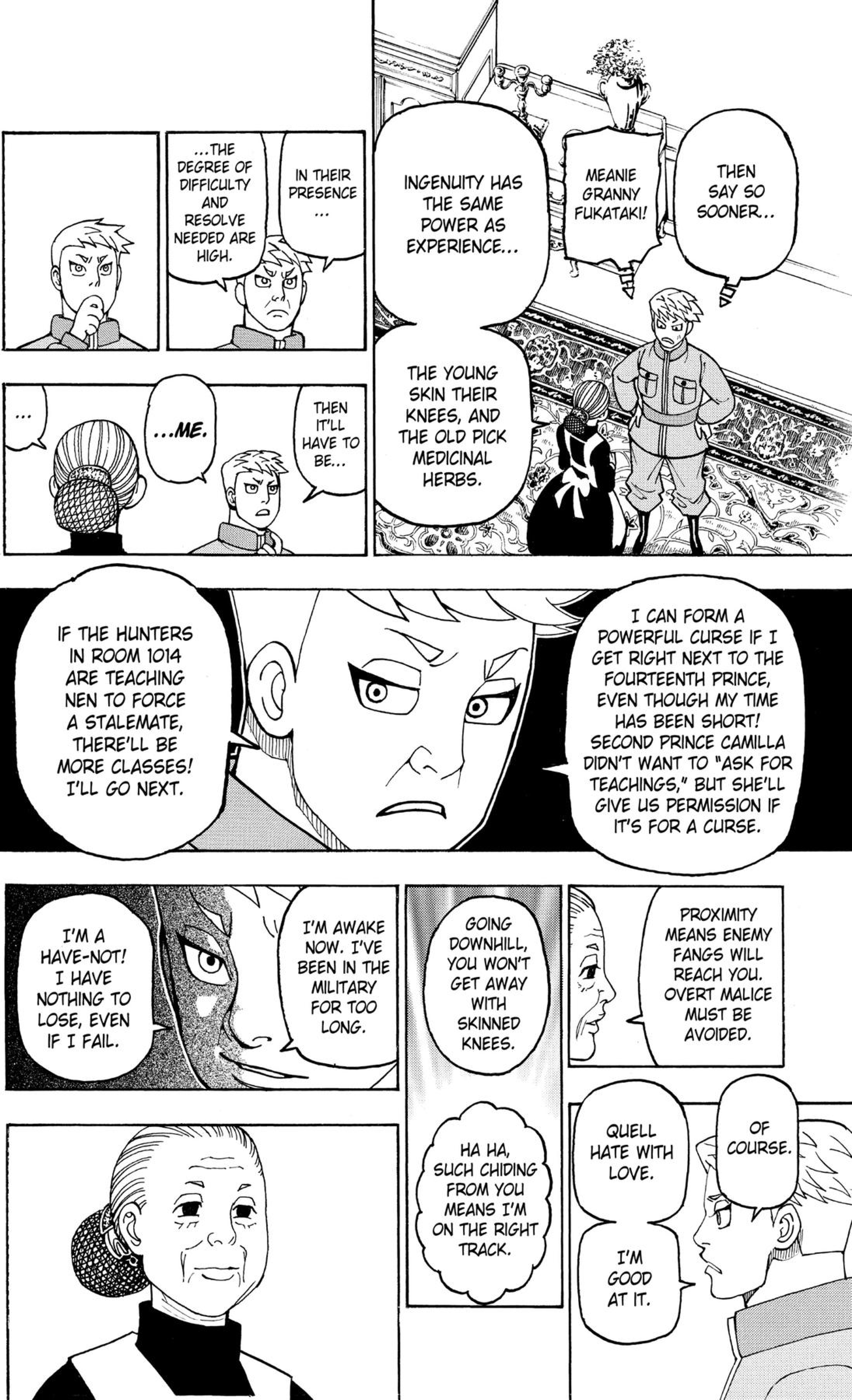

EVER SINCE I FOUND OUT WHY I WAS BORN, I'VE BEEN THINKING OF YOU EVERY DAY...
...SO WE'D BE REUNITED IN THE AFTERLIFE...
I WILL CURSE YOU TO DEATH!!
MOSWANA SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA'S SOLDIER CURSING THE FIRST PRINCE
ALL FOR SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA'S ASCENSION TO THE THRONE AND HER PROSPERITY!
VMM
MANY ANCIENT KINGDOMS HAD A CUSTOM OF SACRIFICIAL BURIAL. ANCIENT KAKIN HAD A PECULIAR PRACTICE OF "AFTERLIFE COMPANIONS."
AFTERLIFE COMPANIONS WERE USED TO SUPERVISE PRINCES WHO WERE UNABLE TO BECOME KING IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD, TO PREVENT THEM FROM TURNING INTO VENGEFUL GHOSTS THAT CURSE THE KING OR THE COUNTRY.
THOUGH IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN HONOR, THEY WERE COMPULSIVELY SELECTED FROM THE HAVE-NOTS, THE LOWEST OF THE IMMUTABLE CASTE SYSTEM.
THE CUSTOM OF AFTERLIFE COMPANIONS FELL INTO DISUSE, BUT THE CASTE REMAINED, AND THEY WERE FORBIDDEN FROM HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICE OR JOINING THE MILITARY AND HOLDING RANK.

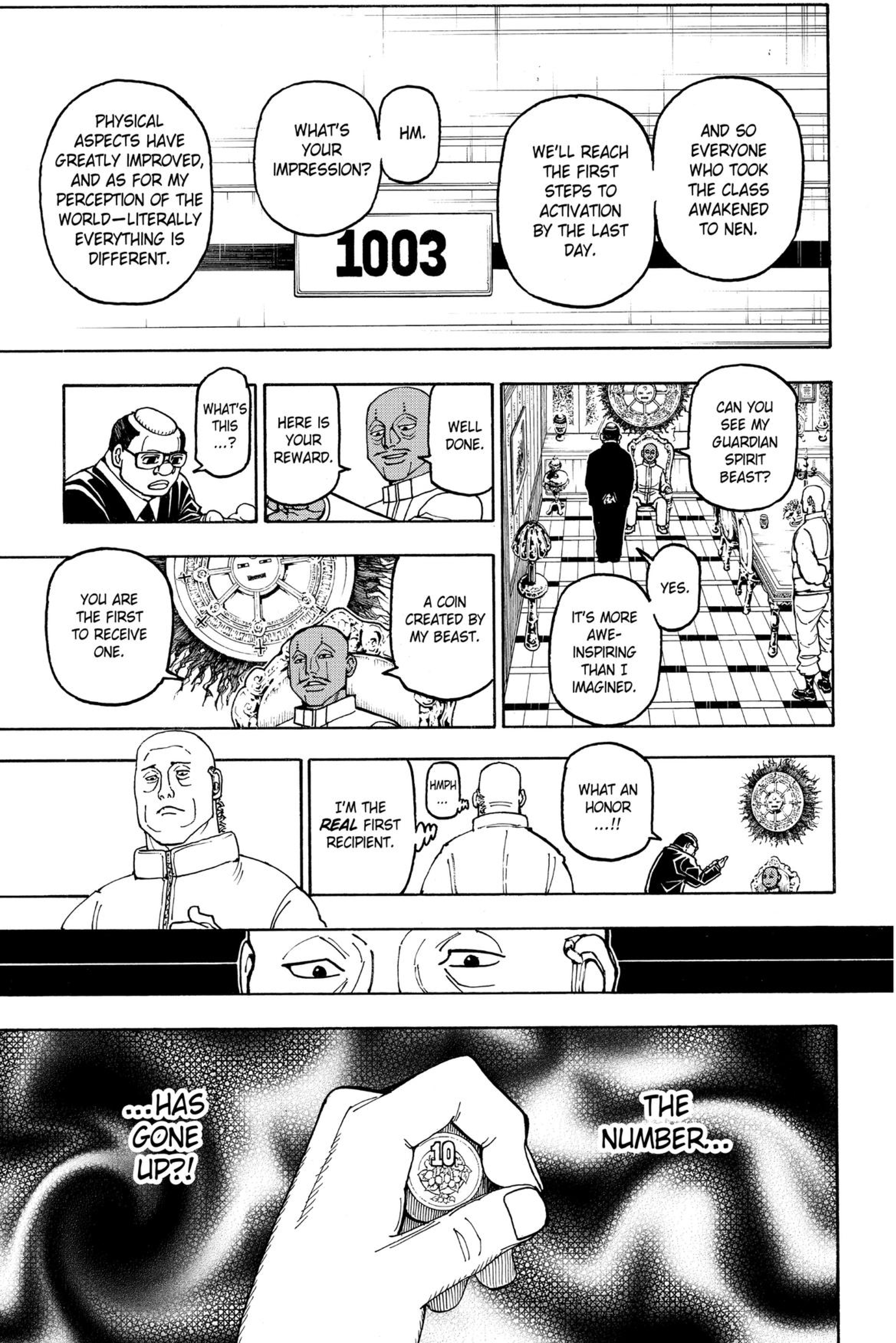

BUT SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA GAVE ALL THE HAVE-NOTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN HER PERSONAL ARMY, CONSTRUCTED A SPECIAL WARD ON HER PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND GAVE THEM THE SAME STATUS AND RIGHTS AS THE ARMED FORCES.
WITH THEIR OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA, THEY SPONTANEOUSLY CALLED FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF AFTERLIFE COMPANIONS. COMBINED WITH NEN ABILITIES, THEY TRANSFORMED INTO POWERFUL CURSE ASSASSINS.
THIRD PRINCE ZHANG LEI
BUCKET
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER CURSING THE THIRD PRINCE
FOURTH PRINCE TSERRIEDNICH
HIGNORI
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER CURSING THE FOURTH PRINCE
FIFTH PRINCE TUBEPPA
GIDAL
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER (ASSOCIATE, PERIMETER SECURITY) CURSING THE FIFTH PRINCE
SIXTH PRINCE TYSON
BURVENA
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER CURSING THE SIXTH PRINCE
SEVENTH PRINCE LUZURUS
LISAMSETTA
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER (ASSOCIATE) CURSING THE SEVENTH PRINCE
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG
KAKO
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER CURSING THE NINTH PRINCE
TENTH PRINCE KACHO
MOZBE
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER (ASSOCIATE) CURSING THE TENTH PRINCE
ELEVENTH PRINCE FUGETSU
MESHUSH
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER (ASSOCIATE) CURSING THE 11TH PRINCE
THIRTEENTH PRINCE MARAYAM
TALER
SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER CURSING THE 13TH PRINCE

THEY CARRIED THEIR TARGET'S NAME, A PHOTOGRAPH, A PIECE OF THEIR CLOTHING, OR A BODILY SPECIMEN AT ALL TIMES AND CURSED THEM WITH EVERY BREATH. THE CURSE BECAME STRONGER THE MORE TIME WENT ON AND THE CLOSER THEY WERE TO THEIR TARGET. THE ABILITY WAS ACTIVATED UPON THEIR DEATH, AND THE IDEAL WAS TO COMMIT SUICIDE IN THE TARGET'S PRESENCE.

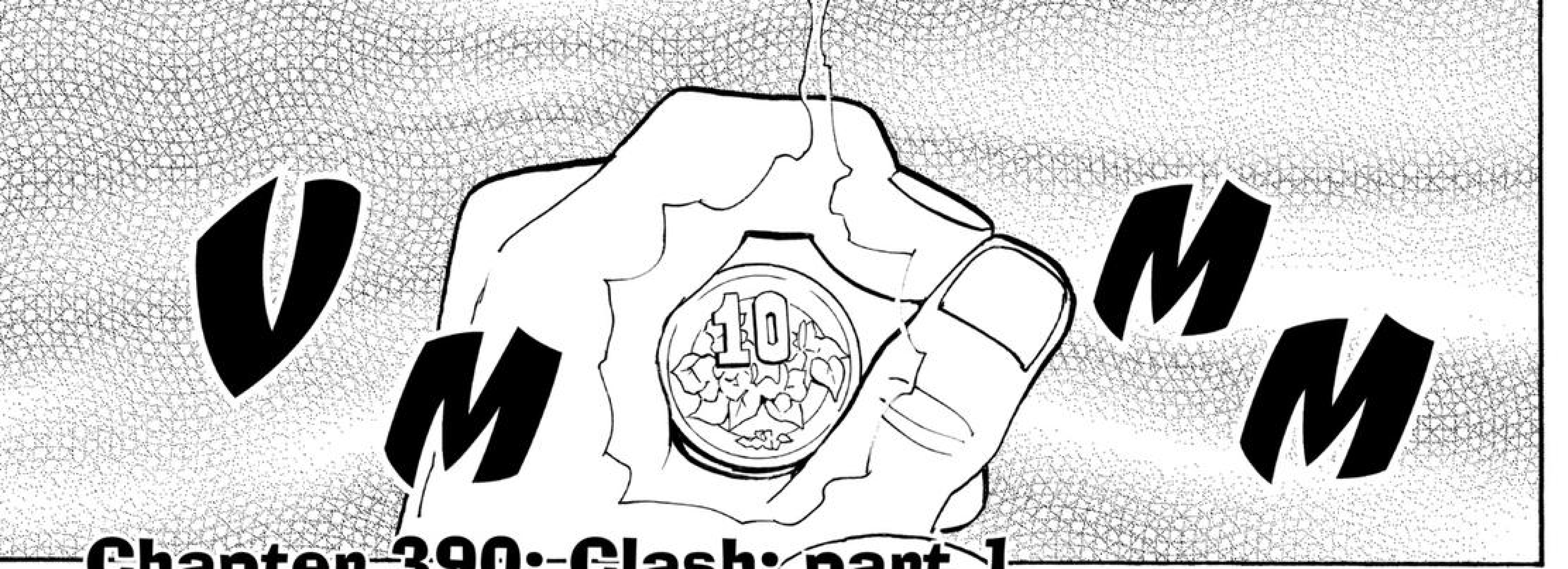

IT'S CLEAR SHIKAKU WASN'T A KAKIN HAVE-NOT.
BUT IT'S POSSIBLE HE USED THE SAME KIND OF CURSE.
NINTH PRINCE HALKENBURG'S MEN ARE MULTINATIONAL, SO WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY'RE FROM.
I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF SOME HAD CIRCUMSTANCES SIMILAR TO OURS.
IF SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA GETS CURSED...
SARAHELL SECOND PRINCE CAPTAIN CURSING THE FOURTEENTH PRINCE
YOU WILL PUT YOUR OWN LIFE ON THE LINE TO EXORCISE!
UMANMA SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER (EXORCIST)
YES'M!
WE DON'T HAVE TO BE COMPANIONS?
NUKUOCON SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER FORMERLY CURSING SALÉ-SALÉ
WE'RE READY TO DO IT.
CAVIC SECOND PRINCE'S SOLDIER FORMERLY CURSING MOMOZE
WE USE OUR LIVES FOR SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA AND THE FUTURE, NOT DEAD PRINCES!
SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA GAVE US A CHOICE WHEN WE WEREN'T EVEN HUMAN.
THOSE RELIEVED OF DUTY WILL INVESTIGATE WHETHER THERE ARE EXORCISTS AMONG THE ENEMY.
DUST IN THE WIND: HELL FRUIT
AN ABILITY UNIQUE TO KAKIN'S HAVE-NOTS. CARRY AN OBJECT CONNECTED TO THE TARGET, ALONG WITH A DAGGER, AND CURSE THE TARGET EVERY DAY. ON THE DAY OF THE DEED, BURN THE OBJECT, DRINK THE INFUSION OF THE ASHES, THEN COMMIT SUICIDE WITH THE DAGGER TO ACTIVATE THE CURSE.
NEVER BOTHER SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA!
YES'M!
THE TARGET WILL BE DEPRIVED OF AURA, AND IN THE CASE OF THE MOST POWERFUL CURSE, WILL BE EXPOSED TO THE FORCE OF THE CURSE UNDER ENFORCED ZETSU, WHICH WILL BE FATAL IN A FEW HOURS.


THE RISK OF FAILURE IS TOO HIGH TO ATTEMPT TO CURSE A HIGHER-RANKED PRINCE WHILE THE GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEASTS' ABILITIES ARE UNKNOWN. WE DON'T KNOW HOW LOYAL THE HUNTERS ARE TO THEIR MISSION EITHER. WHICH TARGET HAS A CHANCE OF SUCCESS? IF THEY EXORCISE THE CURSE, WE COULD AT LEAST FLUSH OUT THE HUNTER ASSOCIATION EXORCIST...
MAYBE THE TENTH, 11TH, OR 13TH PRINCES... THE FOURTEENTH'S CURSE HASN'T HAD ENOUGH TIME...
CALL THE MAJOR-DOMO!
RIGHT HERE.
WHOA! I WANT TO SEND A CURSE TODAY, BUT I WANT TO HAVE THE PRINCE LIVE A FEW DAYS TO SEE IF THE HUNTERS HAVE AN EXORCIST AMONG THEM.
WHO DO YOU THINK IS MOST SUITABLE— MOZBE, MESHUSH, OR TALER?
IF THE CURSE IS SENT FROM THIS ROOM, IT WOULD TAKE THREE MONTHS FOR ALL THREE TO TAKE EFFECT...
FROM ROOM 1002, MOZBE WILL TAKE TEN DAYS. THE OTHER TWO WILL TAKE TWO WEEKS.
CAPTAIN! THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH PRINCES ARE BEING HELD FOR AN ESCAPE ATTEMPT. WE'VE ALSO HEARD RUMORS OF FATALITIES.
WHAT ?!
WON'T THEIR ROOMS GET SEALED THEN?
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN SIX MONTHS IF THEY'RE IN THE CELLS.
THEN TWO WEEKS WITH TALER...
HOLD ON.
THAT WAS IF THE TARGETS ARE DEFENSELESS.
HUH ?
THE ROYALS DEFENDING THE PROSPERITY OF THE DYNASTY ARE PROTECTED BY NOBLE GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEASTS.
IMPERTINENT CURSES SENT FROM THE SAFETY OF OUR OWN TERRITORY WILL BE OBLITERATED WITH ONE SHARP LOOK.
!
THE ONLY THING WE HAVE-NOTS HAVE TO SURPASS THE ROYALS, TO HAVE A CHANCE AT CROSSING SWORDS WITH HIGH-RANKING POWERFUL GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEASTS, IS OUR DETERMINATION.
WITHOUT THE COURAGE AND SUFFICIENT PREPARATION TO PERISH CLOSE ENOUGH TO TOUCH THE PRINCE WHILE LOOKING INTO HIS EYES, HOW COULD OUR CURSE EVER BE SUCCESSFUL?

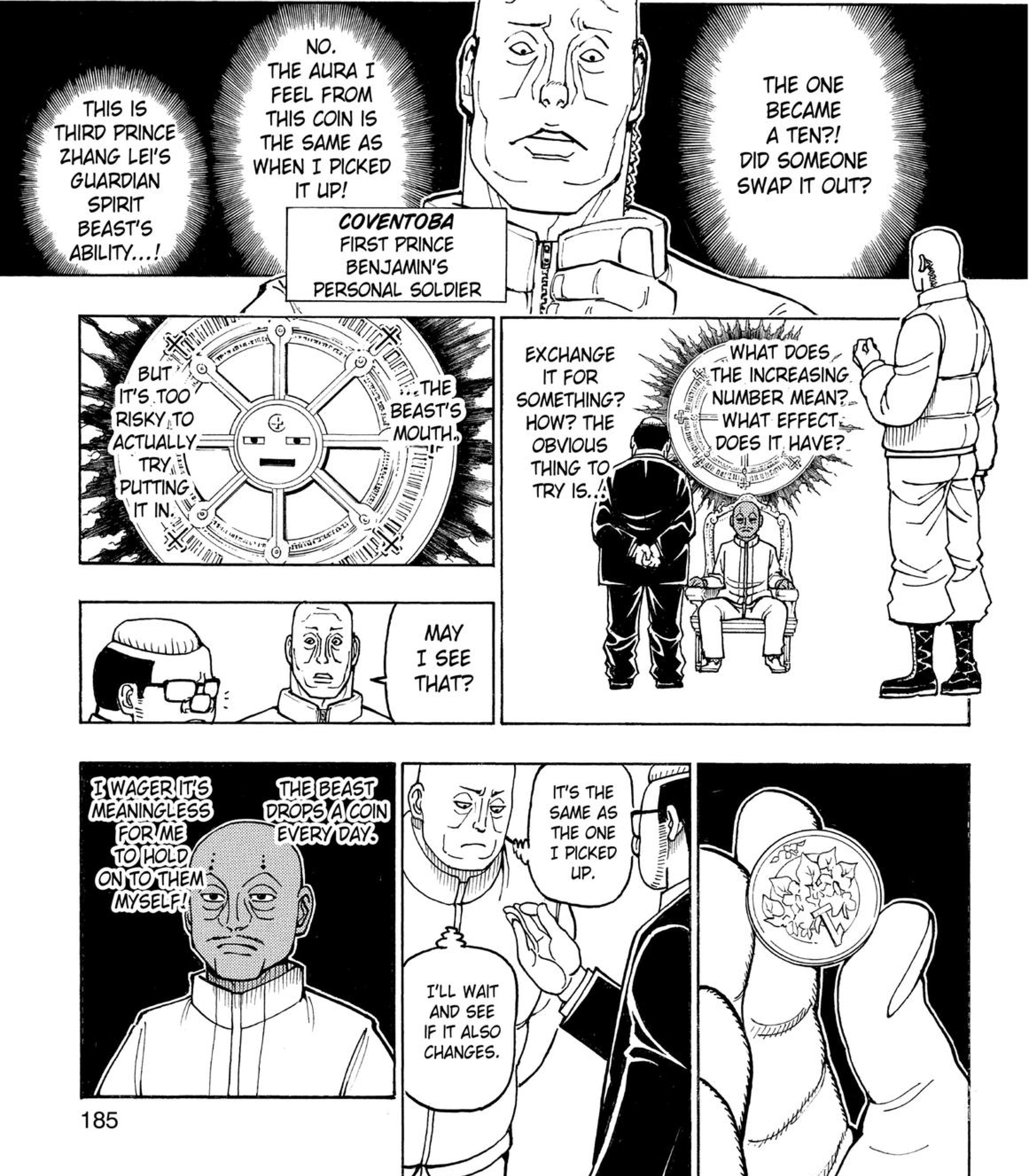

THEN SAY SO SOONER...
MEANIE GRANNY FUKATAKI!
INGENUITY HAS THE SAME POWER AS EXPERIENCE...
THE YOUNG SKIN THEIR KNEES, AND THE OLD PICK MEDICINAL HERBS.
IN THEIR PRESENCE ...
...THE DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY AND RESOLVE NEEDED ARE HIGH.
THEN IT'LL HAVE TO BE...
...ME.
...
I CAN FORM A POWERFUL CURSE IF I GET RIGHT NEXT TO THE FOURTEENTH PRINCE, EVEN THOUGH MY TIME HAS BEEN SHORT! SECOND PRINCE CAMILLA DIDN'T WANT TO "ASK FOR TEACHINGS," BUT SHE'LL GIVE US PERMISSION IF IT'S FOR A CURSE.
IF THE HUNTERS IN ROOM 1014 ARE TEACHING NEN TO FORCE A STALEMATE, THERE'LL BE MORE CLASSES! I'LL GO NEXT.
PROXIMITY MEANS ENEMY FANGS WILL REACH YOU. OVERT MALICE MUST BE AVOIDED.
GOING DOWNHILL, YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH SKINNED KNEES.
I'M AWAKE NOW. I'VE BEEN IN THE MILITARY FOR TOO LONG.
I'M A HAVE-NOT! I HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE, EVEN IF I FAIL.
HA HA, SUCH CHIDING FROM YOU MEANS I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK.
OF COURSE.
QUELL HATE WITH LOVE.
I'M GOOD AT IT.

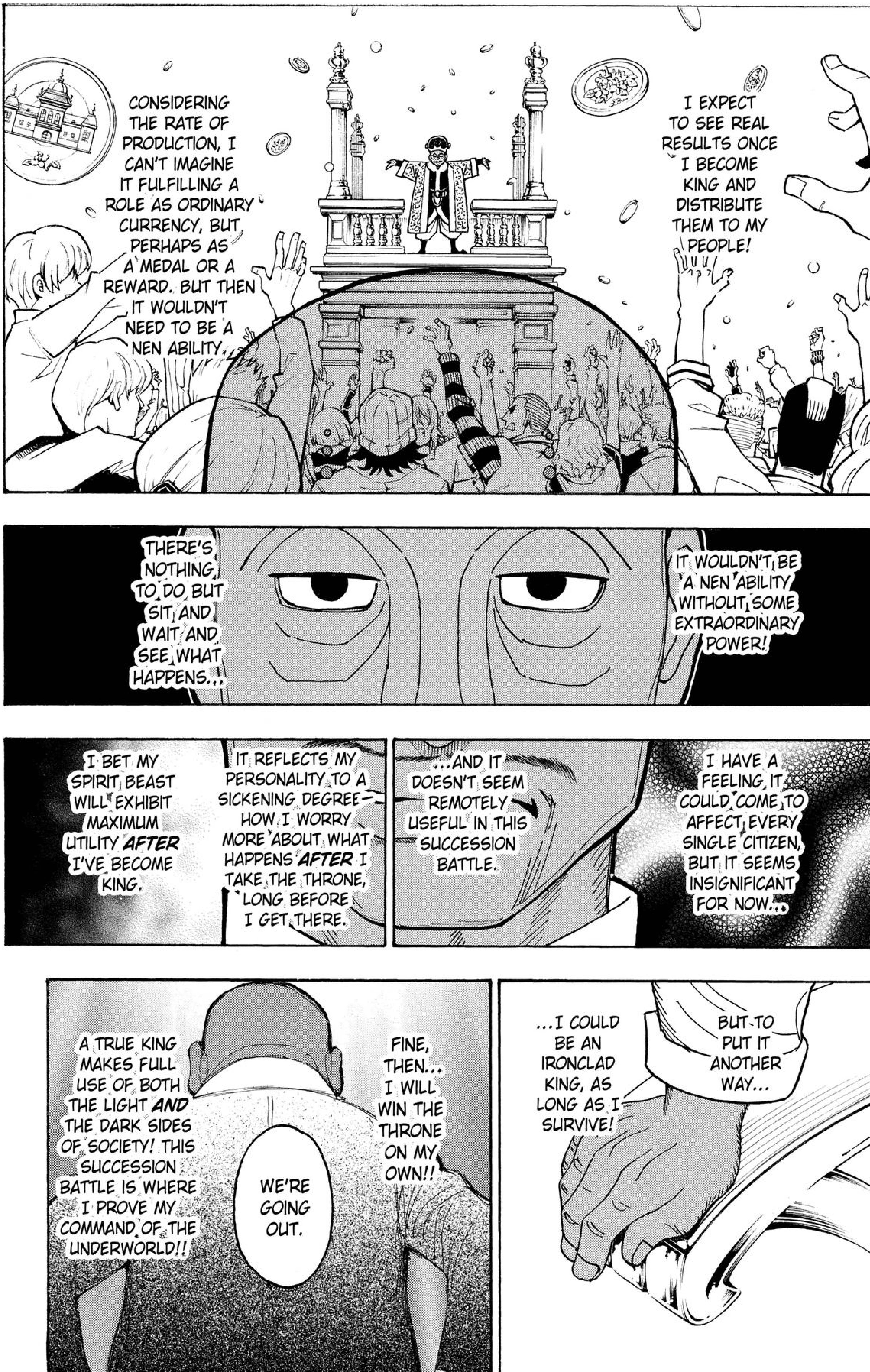

AND SO EVERYONE WHO TOOK THE CLASS AWAKENED TO NEN.
WE'LL REACH THE FIRST STEPS TO ACTIVATION BY THE LAST DAY.
1003
HM.
WHAT'S YOUR IMPRESSION?
PHYSICAL ASPECTS HAVE GREATLY IMPROVED, AND AS FOR MY PERCEPTION OF THE WORLD—LITERALLY EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT.
CAN YOU SEE MY GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST?
YES.
IT'S MORE AWE-INSPIRING THAN I IMAGINED.
WELL DONE.
HERE IS YOUR REWARD.
WHAT'S THIS ...?
A COIN CREATED BY MY BEAST.
YOU ARE THE FIRST TO RECEIVE ONE.
WHAT AN HONOR ...!!
HMPH ...
I'M THE *REAL* FIRST RECIPIENT.
THE NUMBER...
10
...HAS GONE UP?!

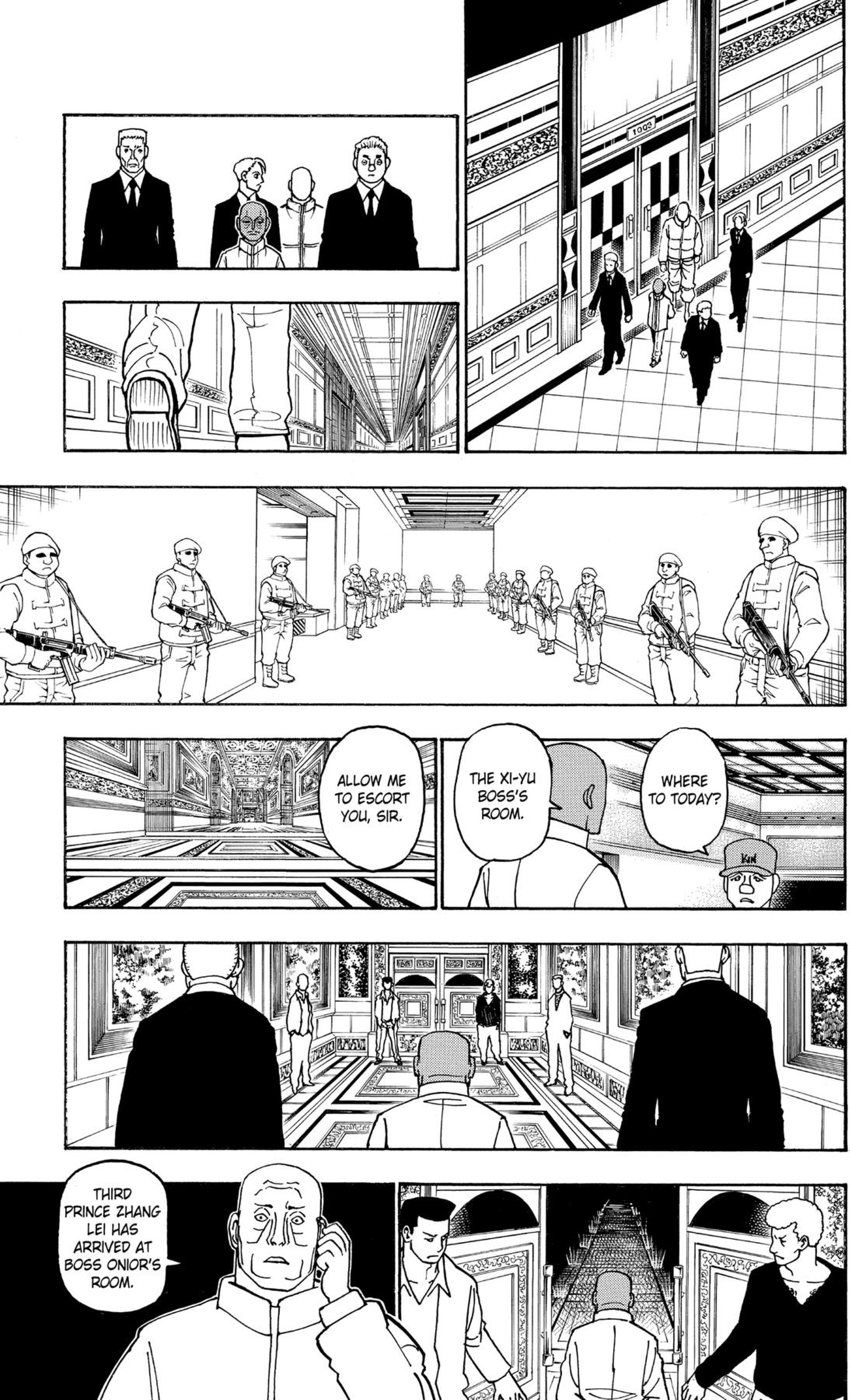
10

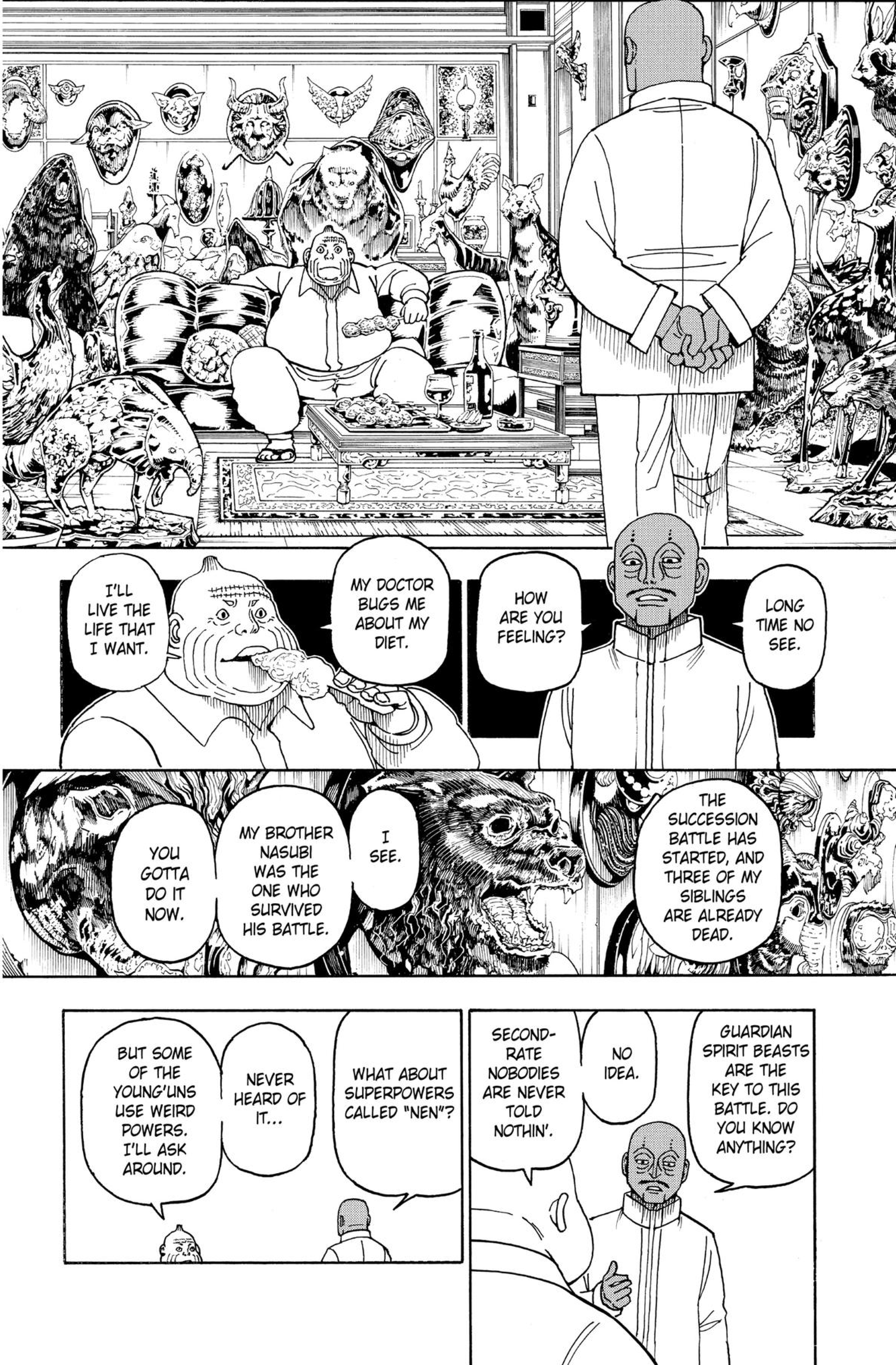


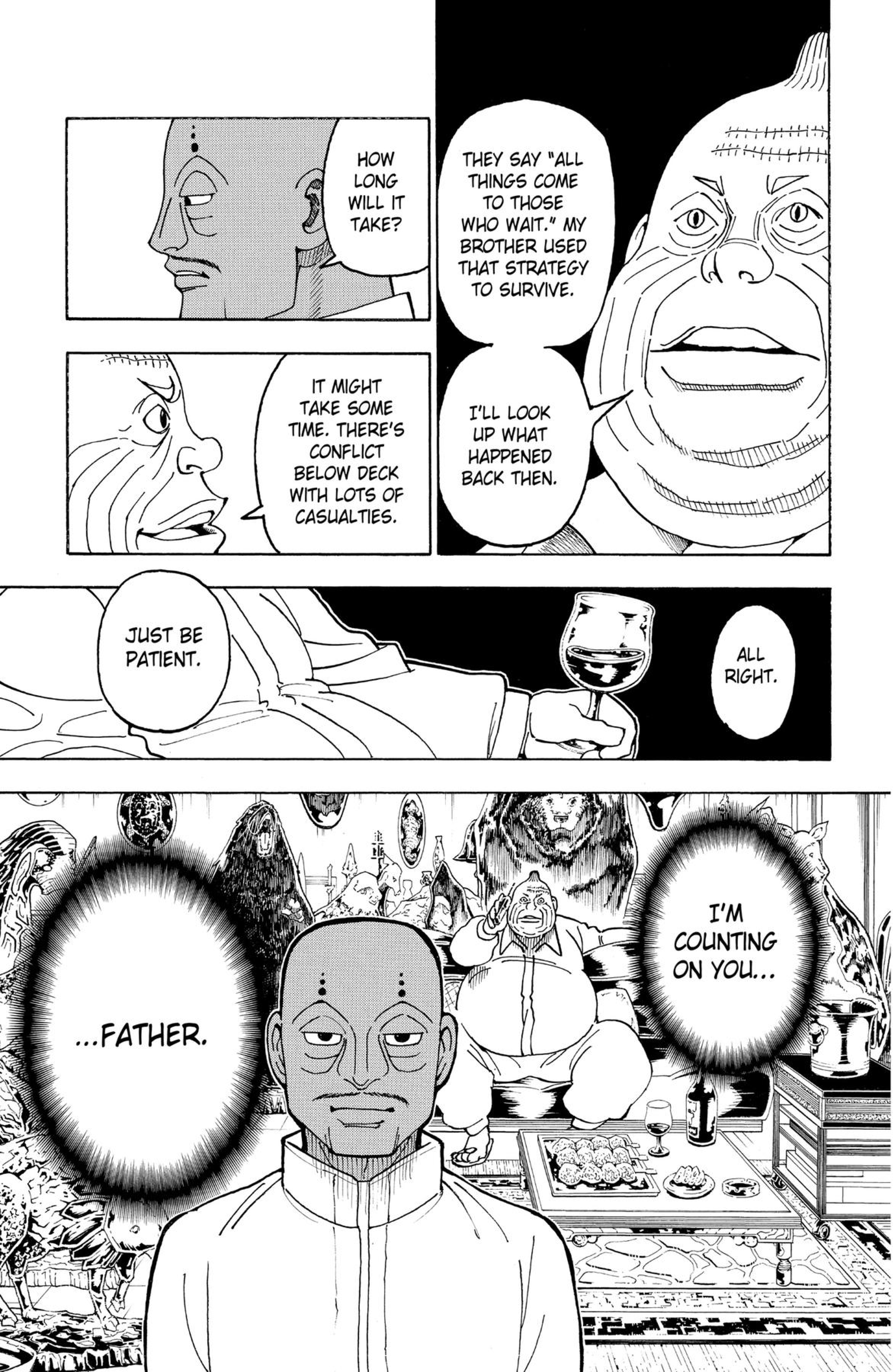
Chapter 390: Clash: part 1

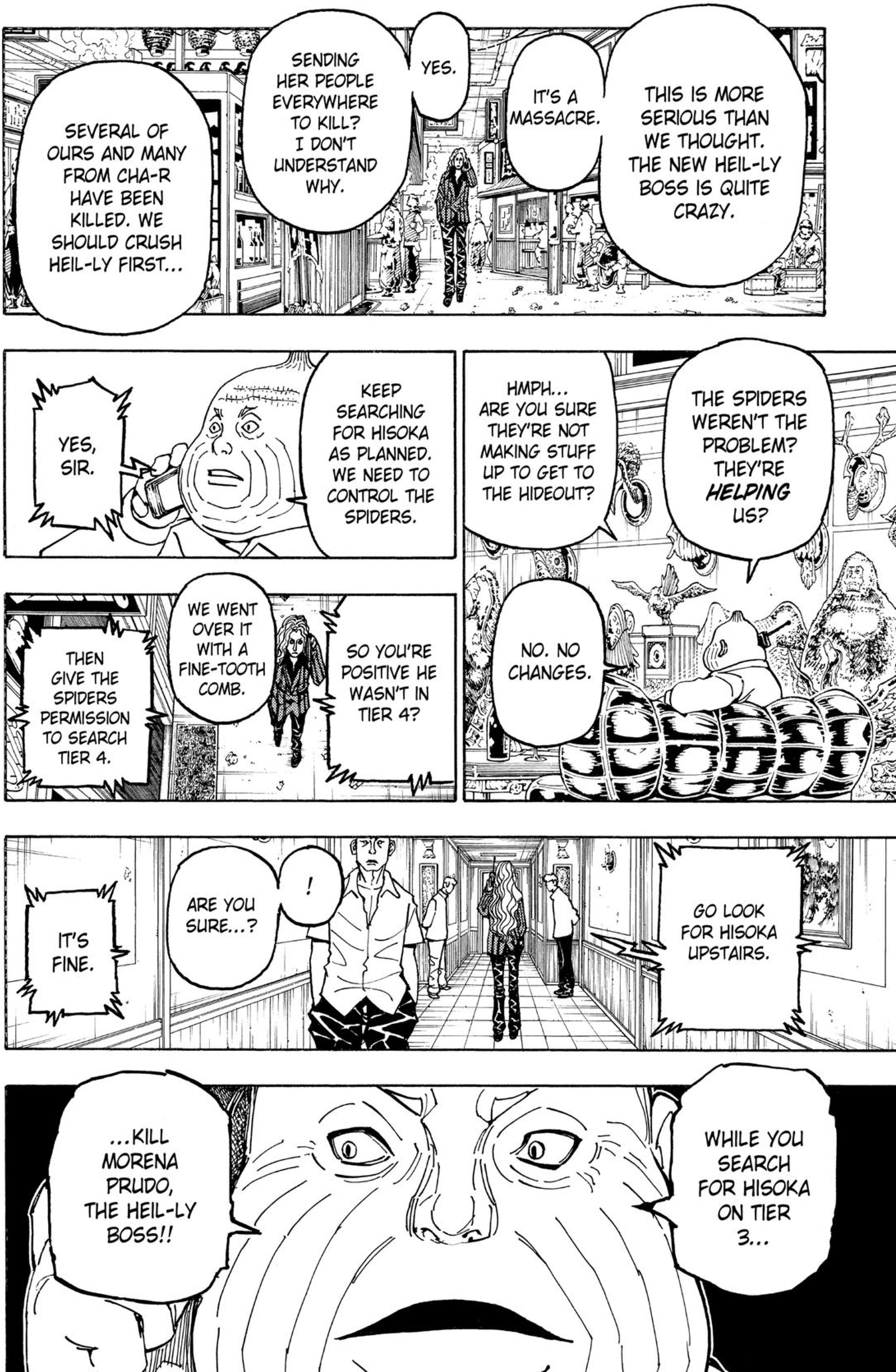

THE ONE BECAME A TEN?! DID SOMEONE SWAP IT OUT?
NO. THE AURA I FEEL FROM THIS COIN IS THE SAME AS WHEN I PICKED IT UP!
THIS IS THIRD PRINCE ZHANG LEI'S GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEAST'S ABILITY...!
COVENTOBA
FIRST PRINCE BENJAMIN'S PERSONAL SOLDIER
WHAT DOES THE INCREASING NUMBER MEAN? WHAT EFFECT DOES IT HAVE?
EXCHANGE IT FOR SOMETHING? HOW? THE OBVIOUS THING TO TRY IS...
...THE BEAST'S MOUTH.
BUT IT'S TOO RISKY TO ACTUALLY TRY PUTTING IT IN.
MAY I SEE THAT?
IT'S THE SAME AS THE ONE I PICKED UP.
I'LL WAIT AND SEE IF IT ALSO CHANGES.
THE BEAST DROPS A COIN EVERY DAY.
I WAGER IT'S MEANINGLESS FOR ME TO HOLD ON TO THEM MYSELF!

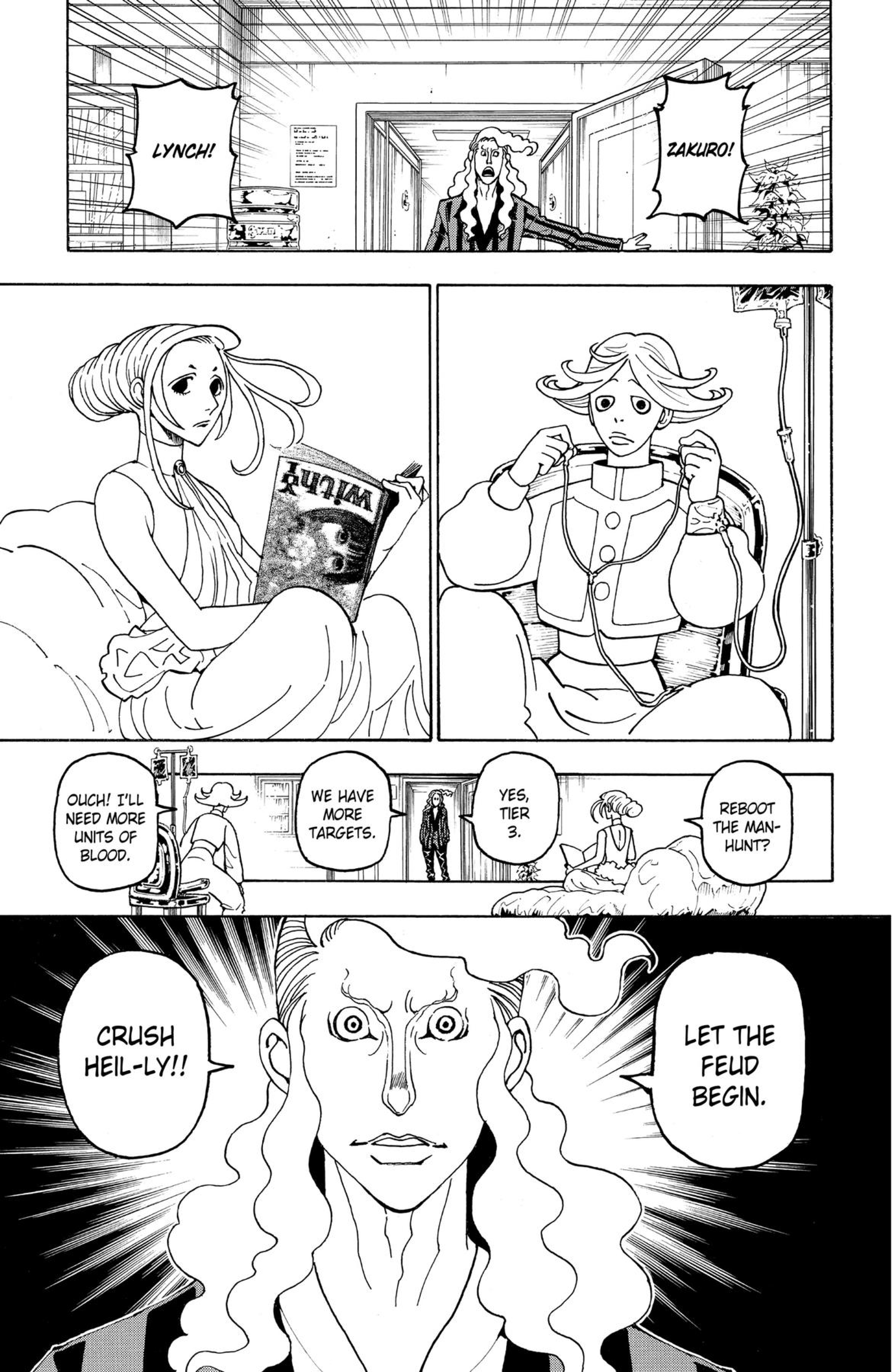

I EXPECT TO SEE REAL RESULTS ONCE I BECOME KING AND DISTRIBUTE THEM TO MY PEOPLE!
CONSIDERING THE RATE OF PRODUCTION, I CAN'T IMAGINE IT FULFILLING A ROLE AS ORDINARY CURRENCY, BUT PERHAPS AS A MEDAL OR A REWARD. BUT THEN IT WOULDN'T NEED TO BE A NEN ABILITY.
IT WOULDN'T BE A NEN ABILITY WITHOUT SOME EXTRAORDINARY POWER!
THERE'S NOTHING TO DO BUT SIT AND WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS...
I HAVE A FEELING IT COULD COME TO AFFECT EVERY SINGLE CITIZEN, BUT IT SEEMS INSIGNIFICANT FOR NOW...
...AND IT DOESN'T SEEM REMOTELY USEFUL IN THIS SUCCESSION BATTLE.
IT REFLECTS MY PERSONALITY TO A SICKENING DEGREE— HOW I WORRY MORE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS *AFTER* I TAKE THE THRONE, LONG BEFORE I GET THERE.
I BET MY SPIRIT BEAST WILL EXHIBIT MAXIMUM UTILITY *AFTER* I'VE BECOME KING.
BUT TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY...
...I COULD BE AN IRONCLAD KING, AS LONG AS I SURVIVE!
FINE, THEN... I WILL WIN THE THRONE ON MY OWN!!
A TRUE KING MAKES FULL USE OF BOTH THE LIGHT *AND* THE DARK SIDES OF SOCIETY! THIS SUCCESSION BATTLE IS WHERE I PROVE MY COMMAND OF THE UNDERWORLD!!
WE'RE GOING OUT.

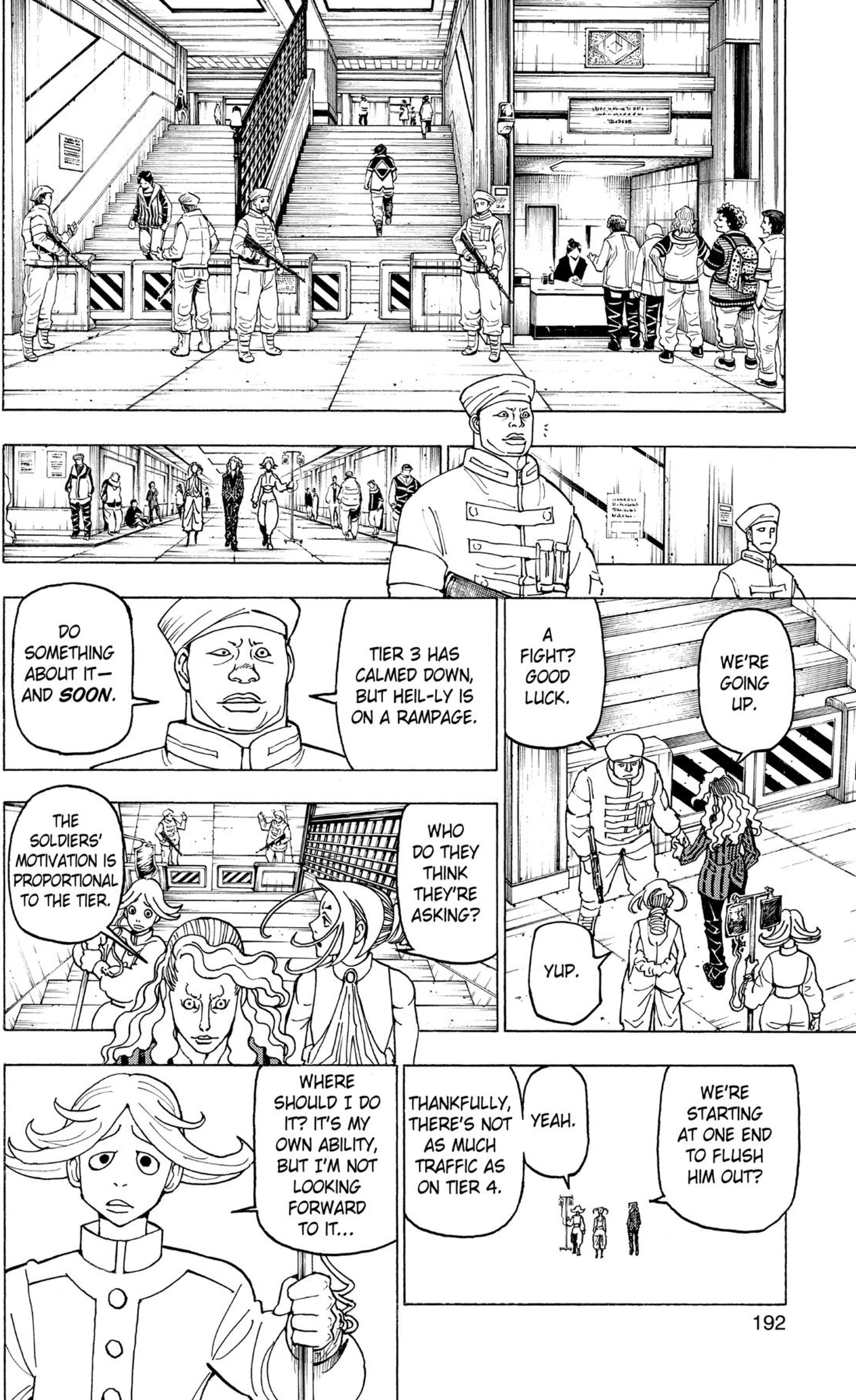

1002
WHERE TO TODAY?
KIN
THE XI-YU BOSS'S ROOM.
ALLOW ME TO ESCORT YOU, SIR.
THIRD PRINCE ZHANG LEI HAS ARRIVED AT BOSS ONIOR'S ROOM.

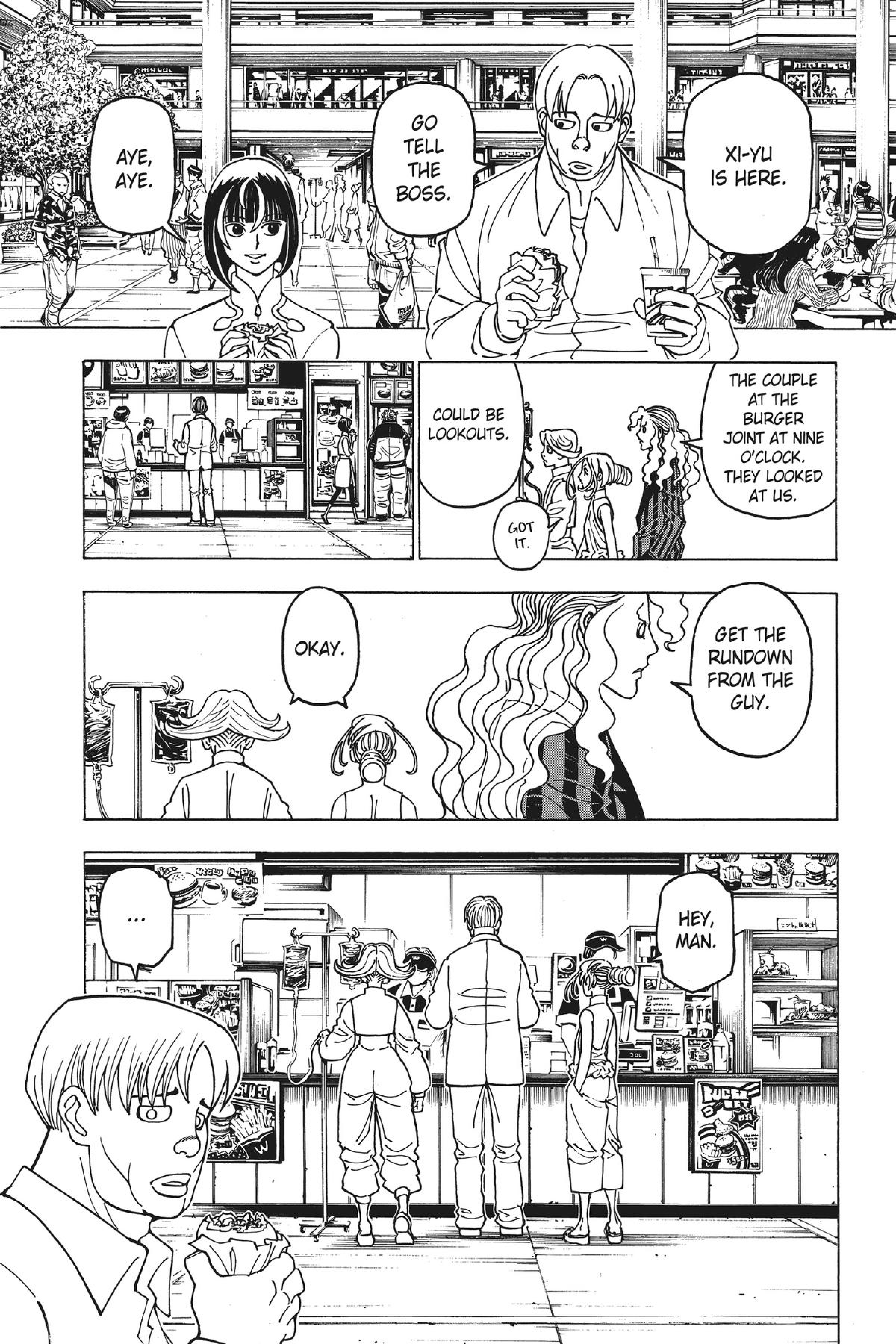

LONG TIME NO SEE.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
MY DOCTOR BUGS ME ABOUT MY DIET.
I'LL LIVE THE LIFE THAT I WANT.
THE SUCCESSION BATTLE HAS STARTED, AND THREE OF MY SIBLINGS ARE ALREADY DEAD.
I SEE.
MY BROTHER NASUBI WAS THE ONE WHO SURVIVED HIS BATTLE.
YOU GOTTA DO IT NOW.
GUARDIAN SPIRIT BEASTS ARE THE KEY TO THIS BATTLE. DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING?
NO IDEA.
SECOND-RATE NOBODIES ARE NEVER TOLD NOTHIN'.
WHAT ABOUT SUPERPOWERS CALLED "NEN"?
NEVER HEARD OF IT...
BUT SOME OF THE YOUNG'UNS USE WEIRD POWERS. I'LL ASK AROUND.

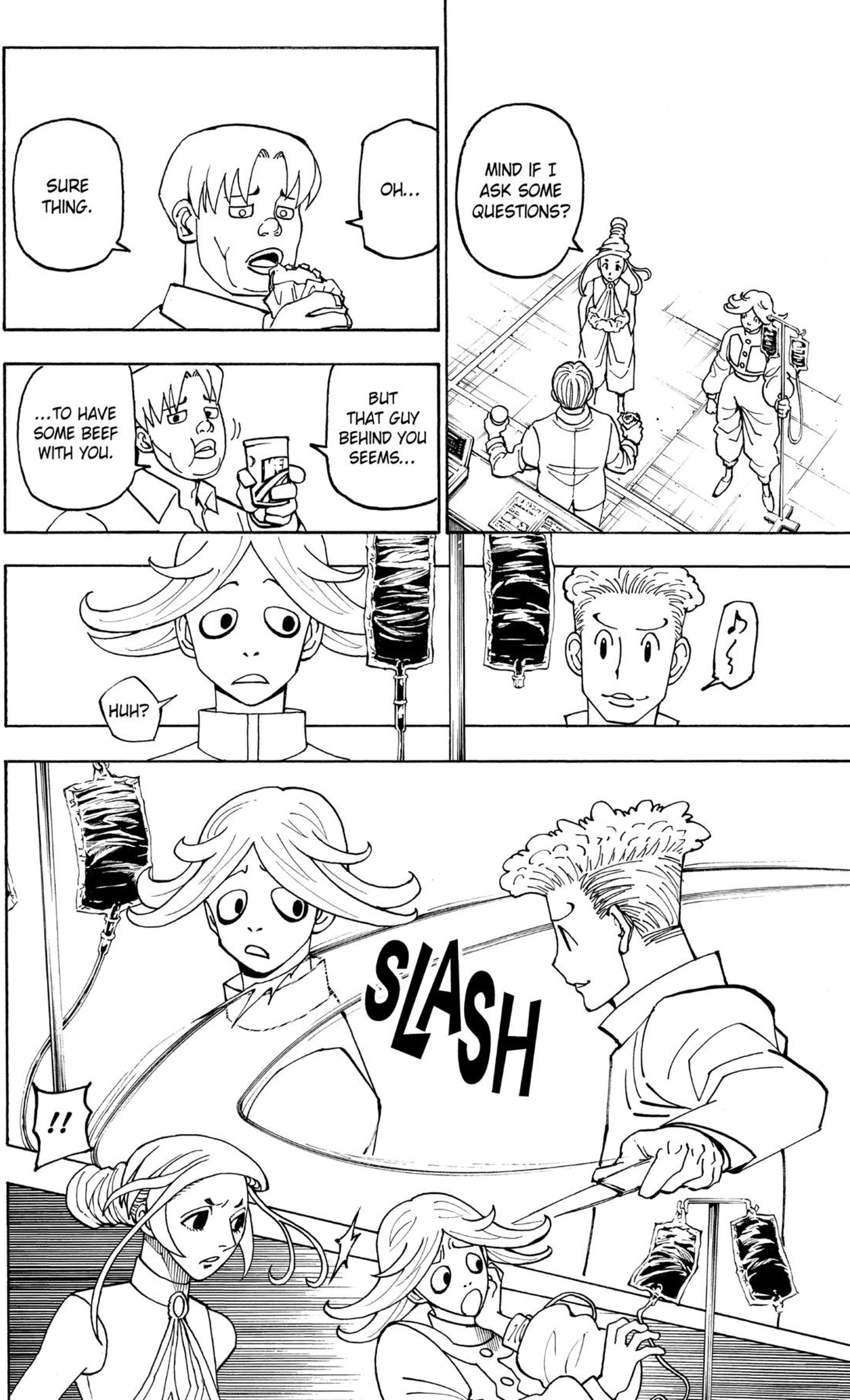

THEY SAY "ALL THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT." MY BROTHER USED THAT STRATEGY TO SURVIVE.
I'LL LOOK UP WHAT HAPPENED BACK THEN.
HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
IT MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME. THERE'S CONFLICT BELOW DECK WITH LOTS OF CASUALTIES.
ALL RIGHT.
JUST BE PATIENT.
I'M COUNTING ON YOU...
...FATHER.

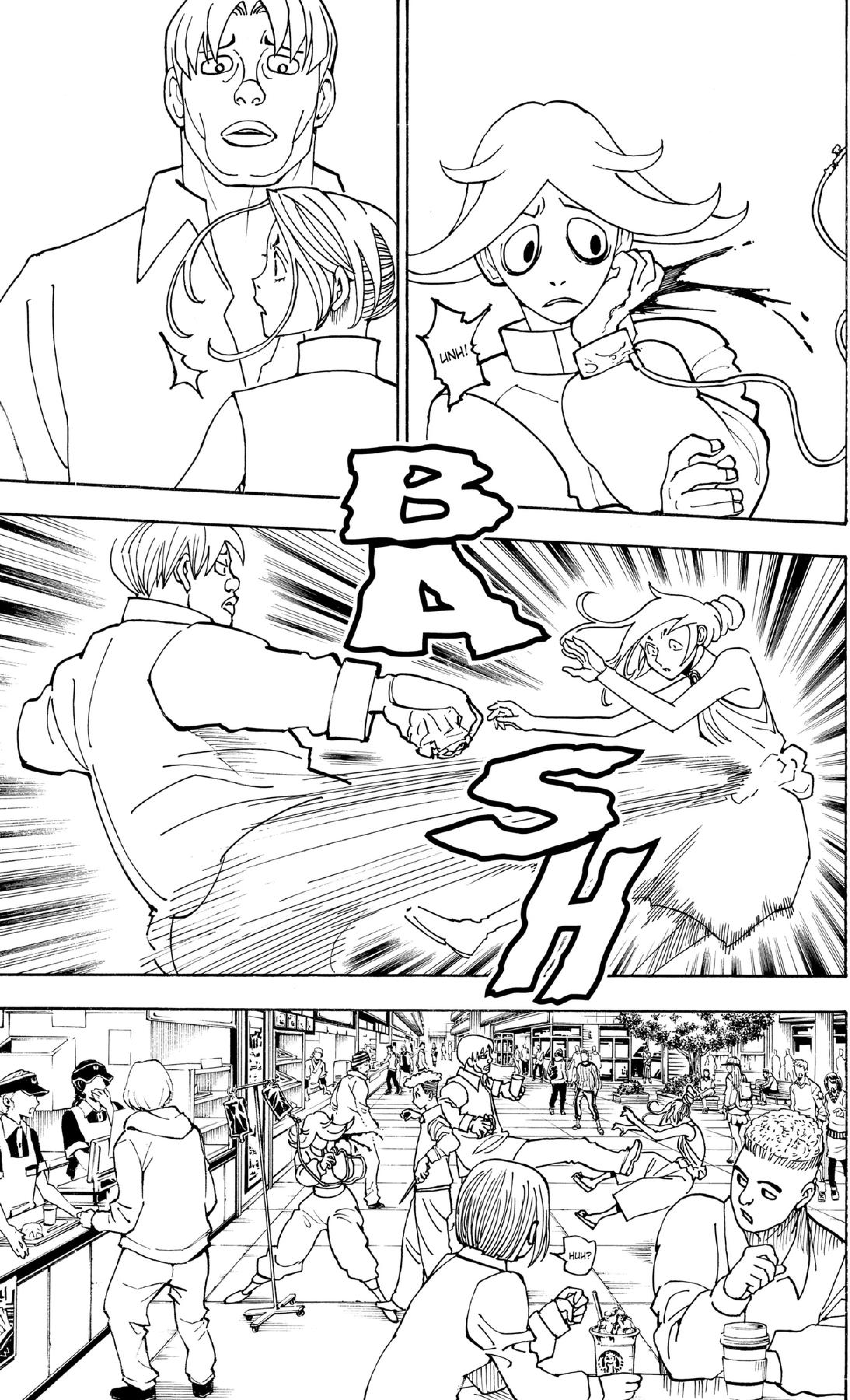

THIS IS MORE SERIOUS THAN WE THOUGHT. THE NEW HEIL-LY BOSS IS QUITE CRAZY.
IT'S A MASSACRE.
YES.
SENDING HER PEOPLE EVERYWHERE TO KILL? I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY.
SEVERAL OF OURS AND MANY FROM CHA-R HAVE BEEN KILLED. WE SHOULD CRUSH HEIL-LY FIRST...
THE SPIDERS WEREN'T THE PROBLEM? THEY'RE *HELPING* US?
HMPH... ARE YOU SURE THEY'RE NOT MAKING STUFF UP TO GET TO THE HIDEOUT?
NO. NO CHANGES.
KEEP SEARCHING FOR HISOKA AS PLANNED. WE NEED TO CONTROL THE SPIDERS.
YES, SIR.
SO YOU'RE POSITIVE HE WASN'T IN TIER 4?
WE WENT OVER IT WITH A FINE-TOOTH COMB.
THEN GIVE THE SPIDERS PERMISSION TO SEARCH TIER 4.
GO LOOK FOR HISOKA UPSTAIRS.
!
ARE YOU SURE...?
IT'S FINE.
WHILE YOU SEARCH FOR HISOKA ON TIER 3...
...KILL MORENA PRUDO, THE HEIL-LY BOSS!!

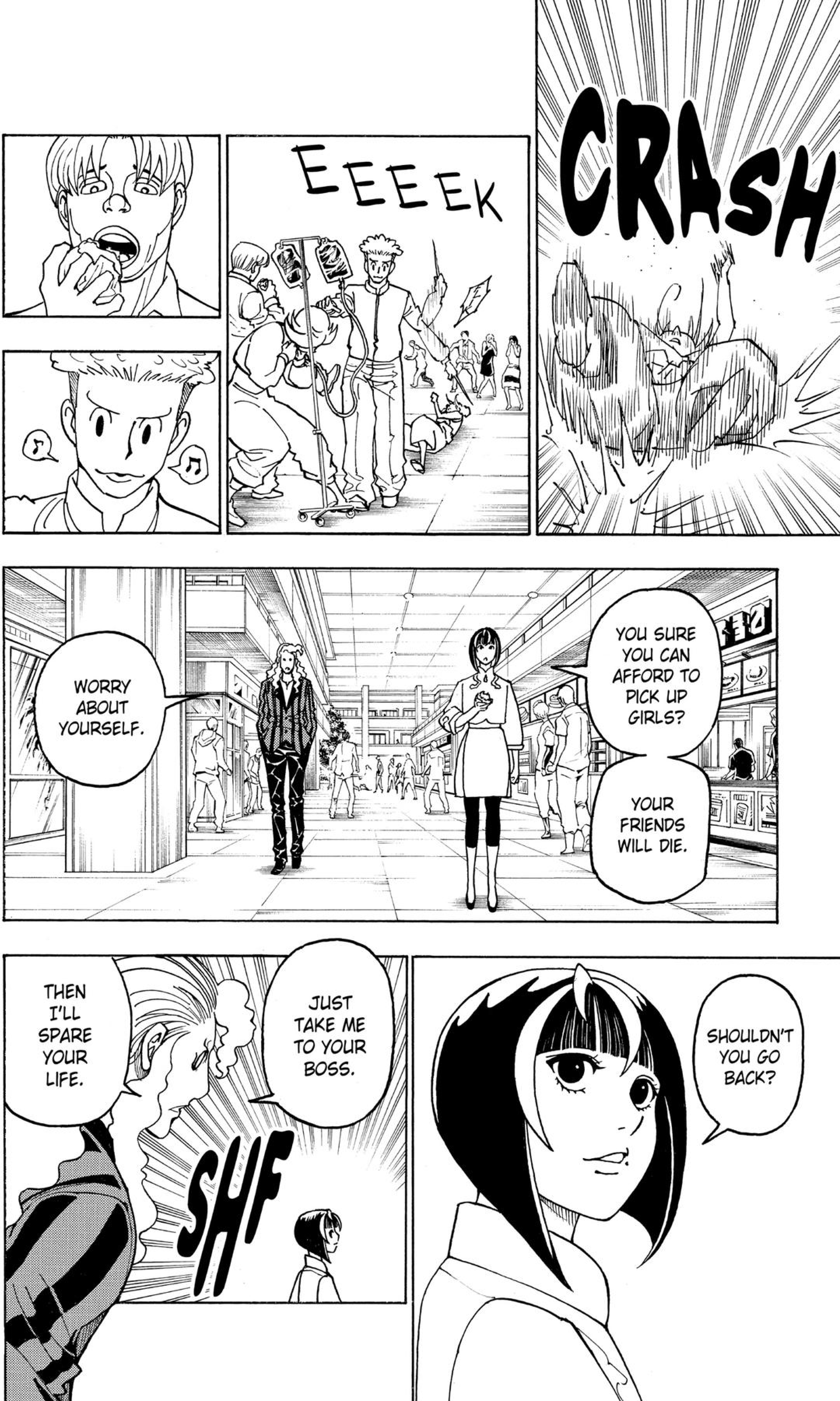

ZAKURO!
LYNCH!
REBOOT THE MAN-HUNT?
YES, TIER 3.
WE HAVE MORE TARGETS.
OUCH! I'LL NEED MORE UNITS OF BLOOD.
LET THE FEUD BEGIN.
CRUSH HEIL-LY!!

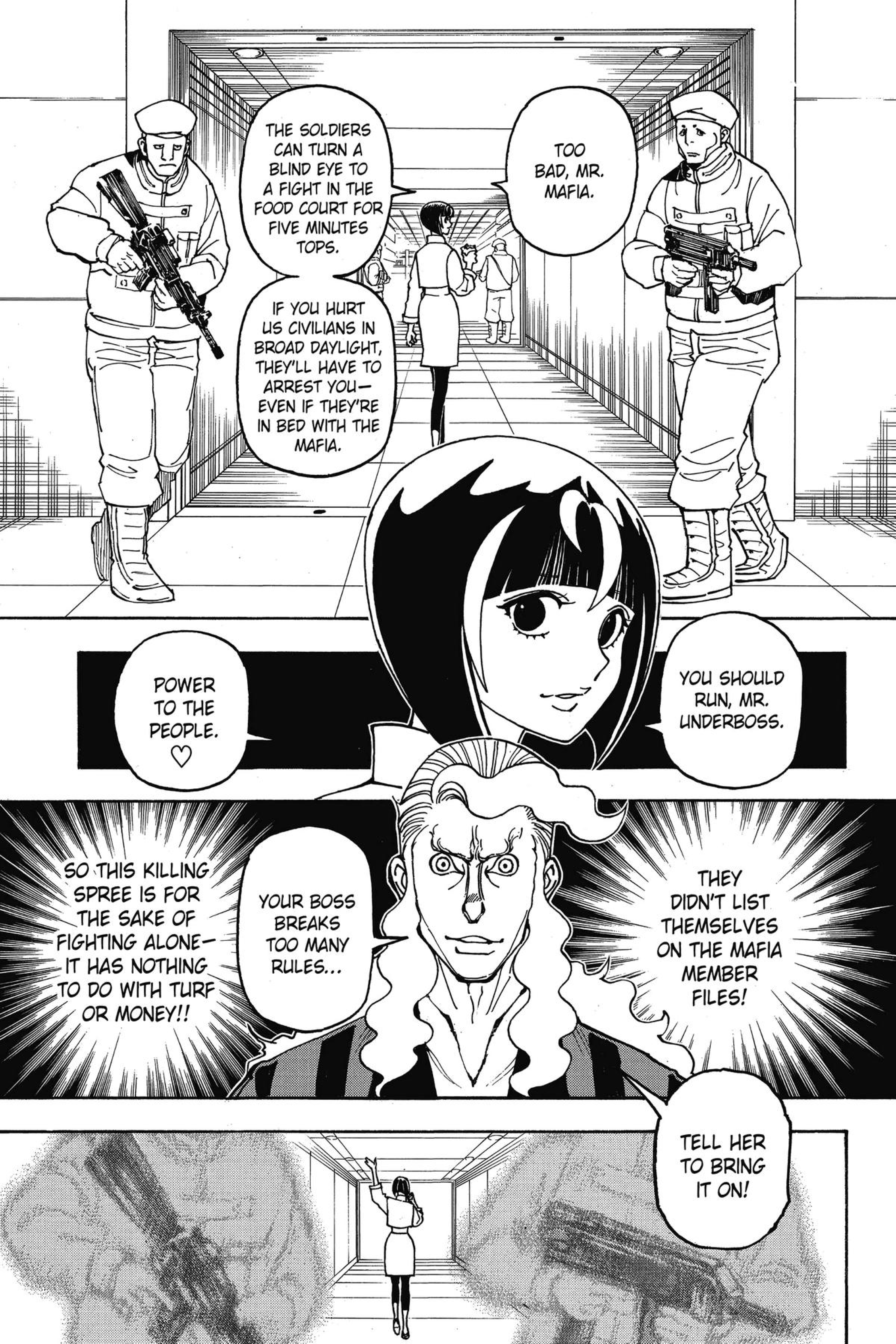

TIER 3 HAS CALMED DOWN, BUT HEIL-LY IS ON A RAMPAGE.
DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT— AND ***SOON***.
WHO DO THEY THINK THEY'RE ASKING?
THE SOLDIERS' MOTIVATION IS PROPORTIONAL TO THE TIER.
WE'RE GOING UP.
A FIGHT? GOOD LUCK.
YUP.
WE'RE STARTING AT ONE END TO FLUSH HIM OUT?
YEAH.
THANKFULLY, THERE'S NOT AS MUCH TRAFFIC AS ON TIER 4.
WHERE SHOULD I DO IT? IT'S MY OWN ABILITY, BUT I'M NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO IT...

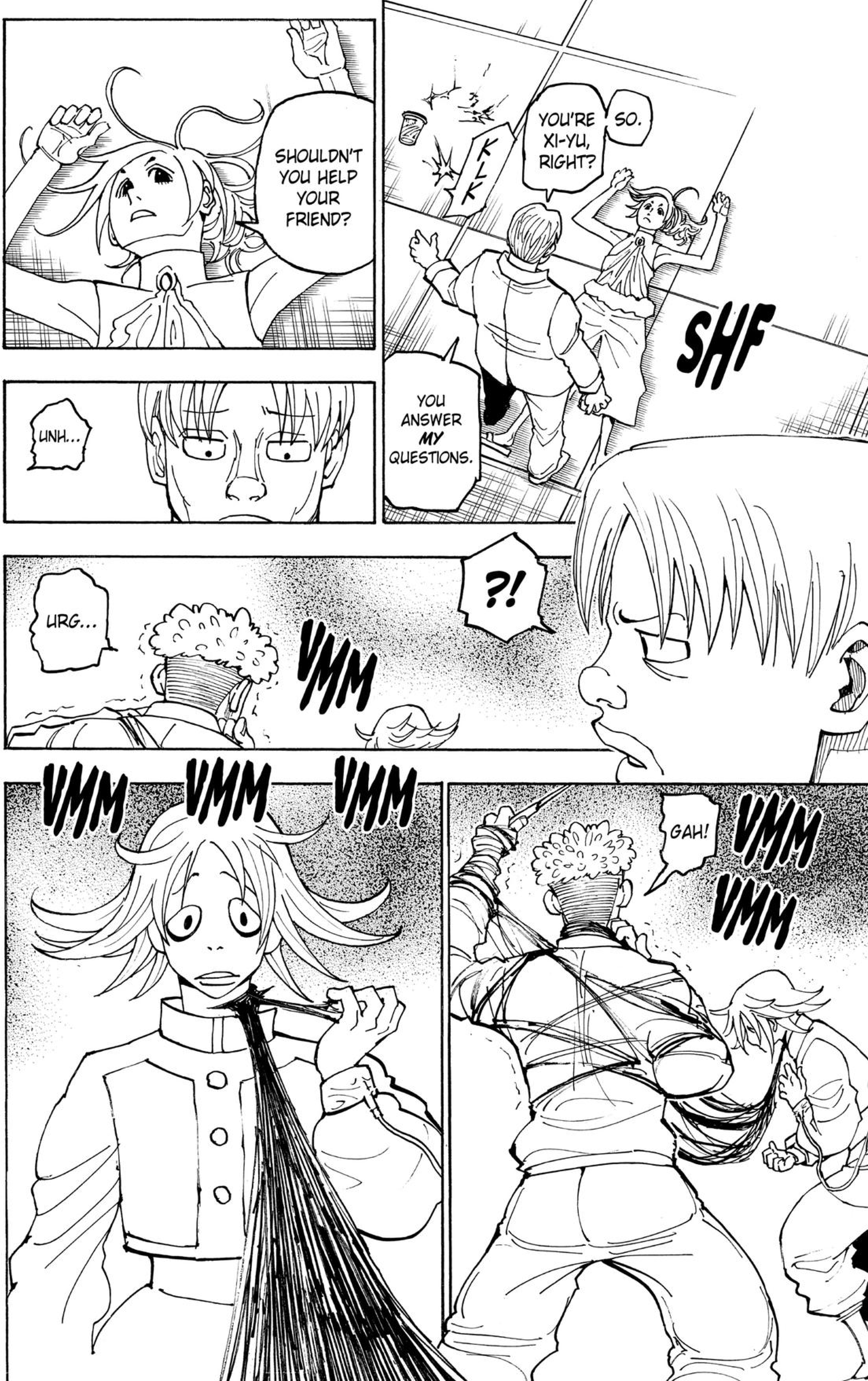

XI-YU IS HERE.
GO TELL THE BOSS.
AYE, AYE.
THE COUPLE AT THE BURGER JOINT AT NINE O'CLOCK. THEY LOOKED AT US.
COULD BE LOOKOUTS.
GOT IT.
GET THE RUNDOWN FROM THE GUY.
OKAY.
HEY, MAN.
...

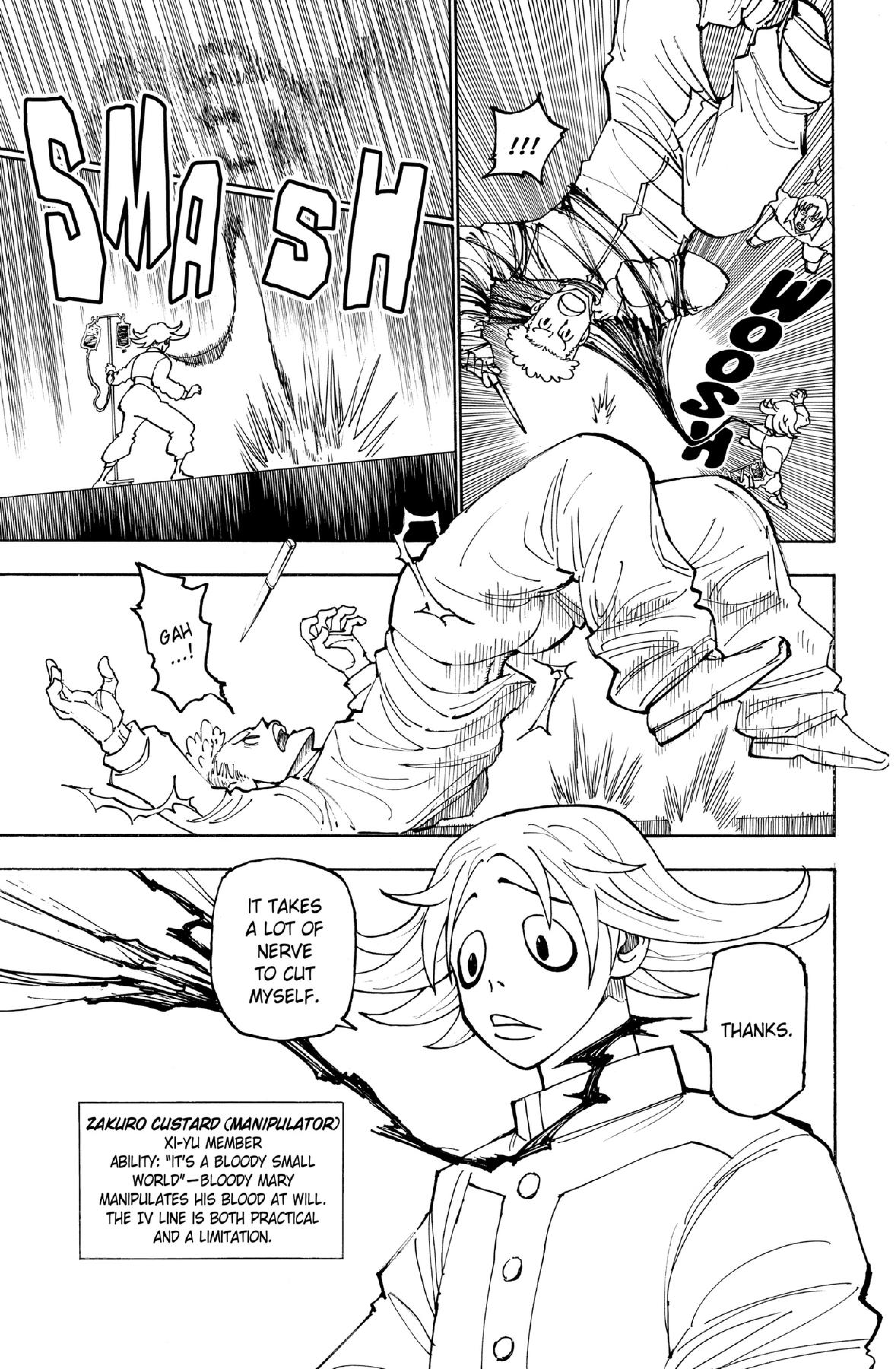

MIND IF I ASK SOME QUESTIONS?
OH...
SURE THING.
BUT THAT GUY BEHIND YOU SEEMS...
...TO HAVE SOME BEEF WITH YOU.
♪
HUH?
SLASH
!!

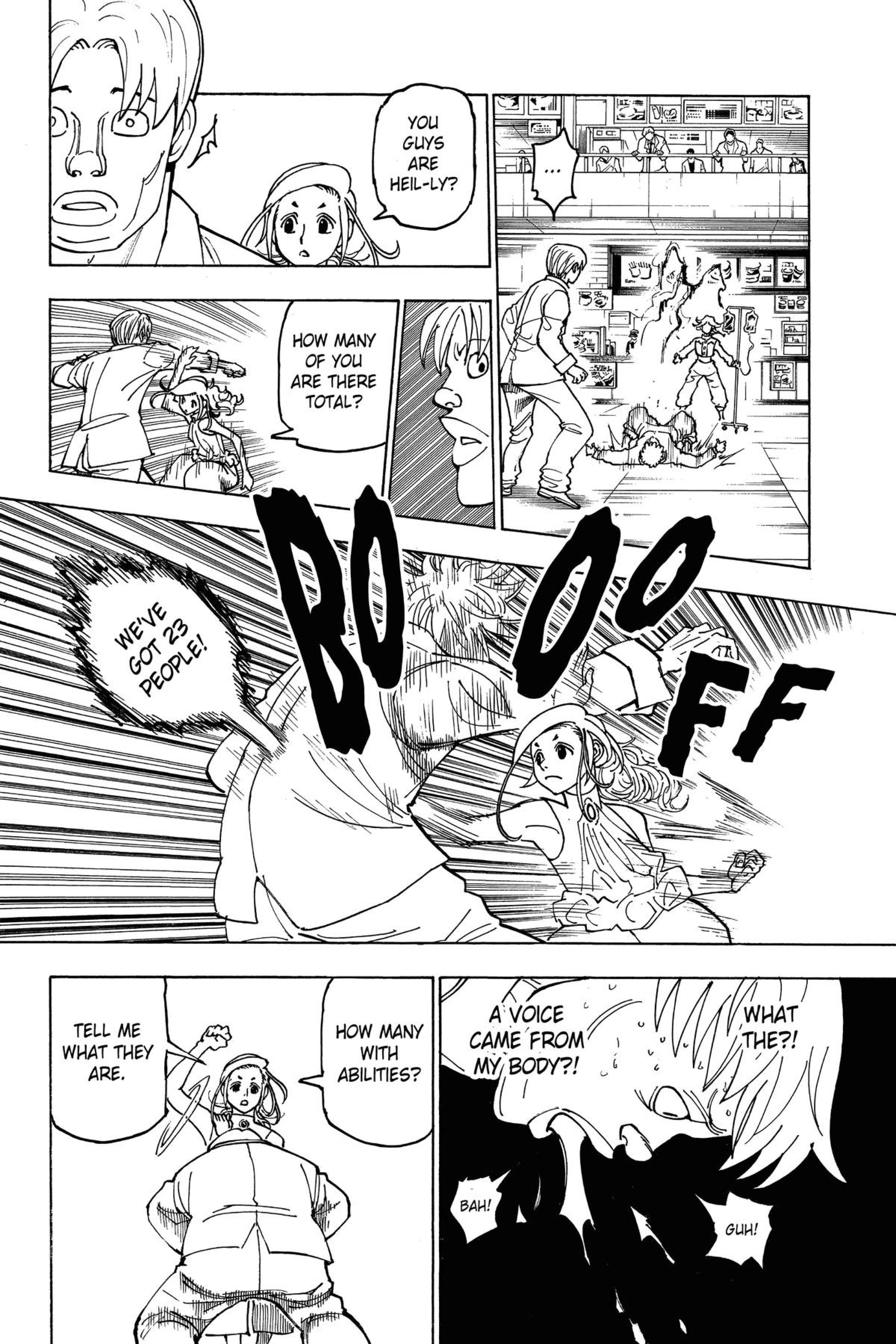

UNH!
BASH
HUH?

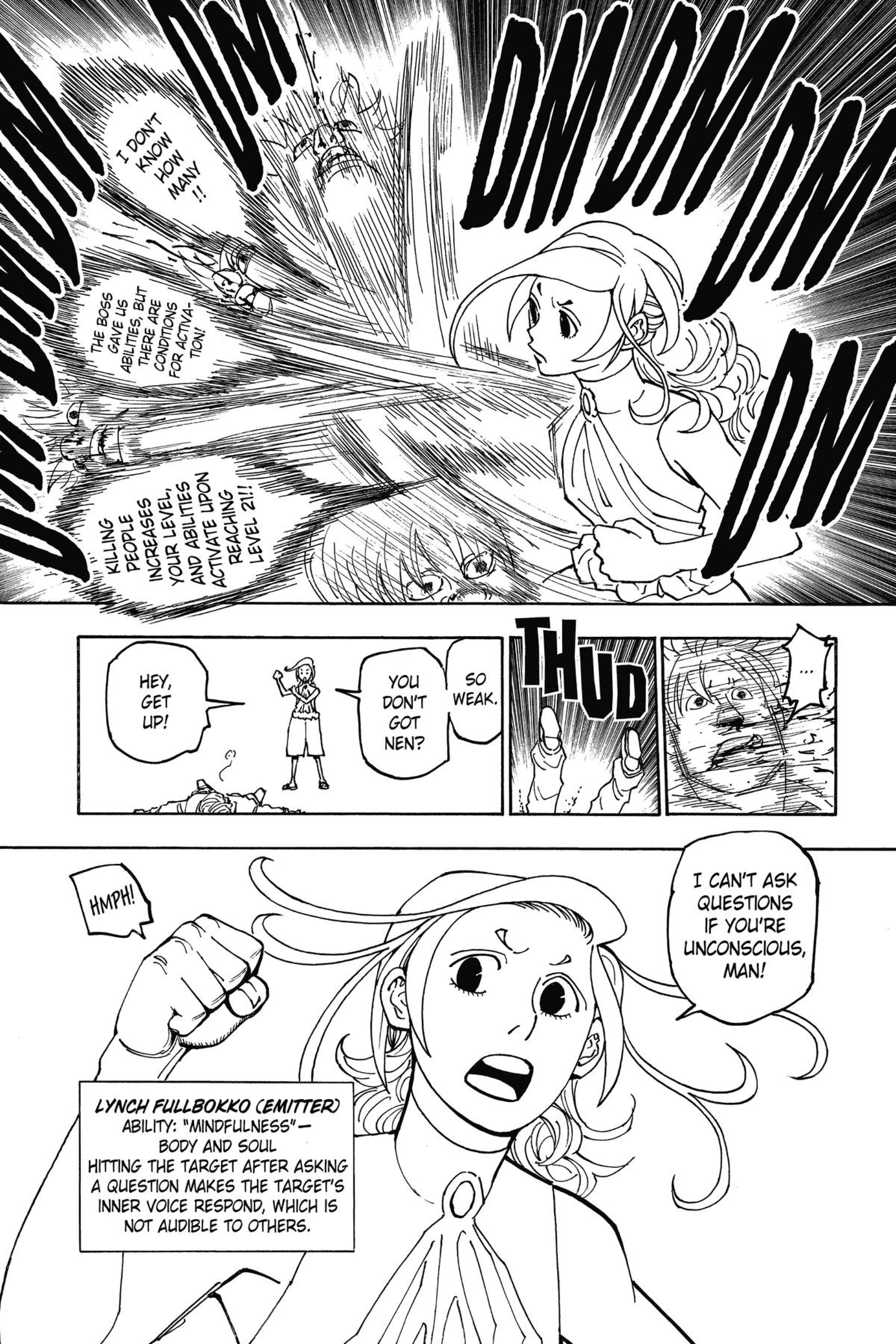

CRASH
EEEEK
♪ ♪
YOU SURE YOU CAN AFFORD TO PICK UP GIRLS?
YOUR FRIENDS WILL DIE.
WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF.
SHOULDN'T YOU GO BACK?
JUST TAKE ME TO YOUR BOSS.
THEN I'LL SPARE YOUR LIFE.
SHF

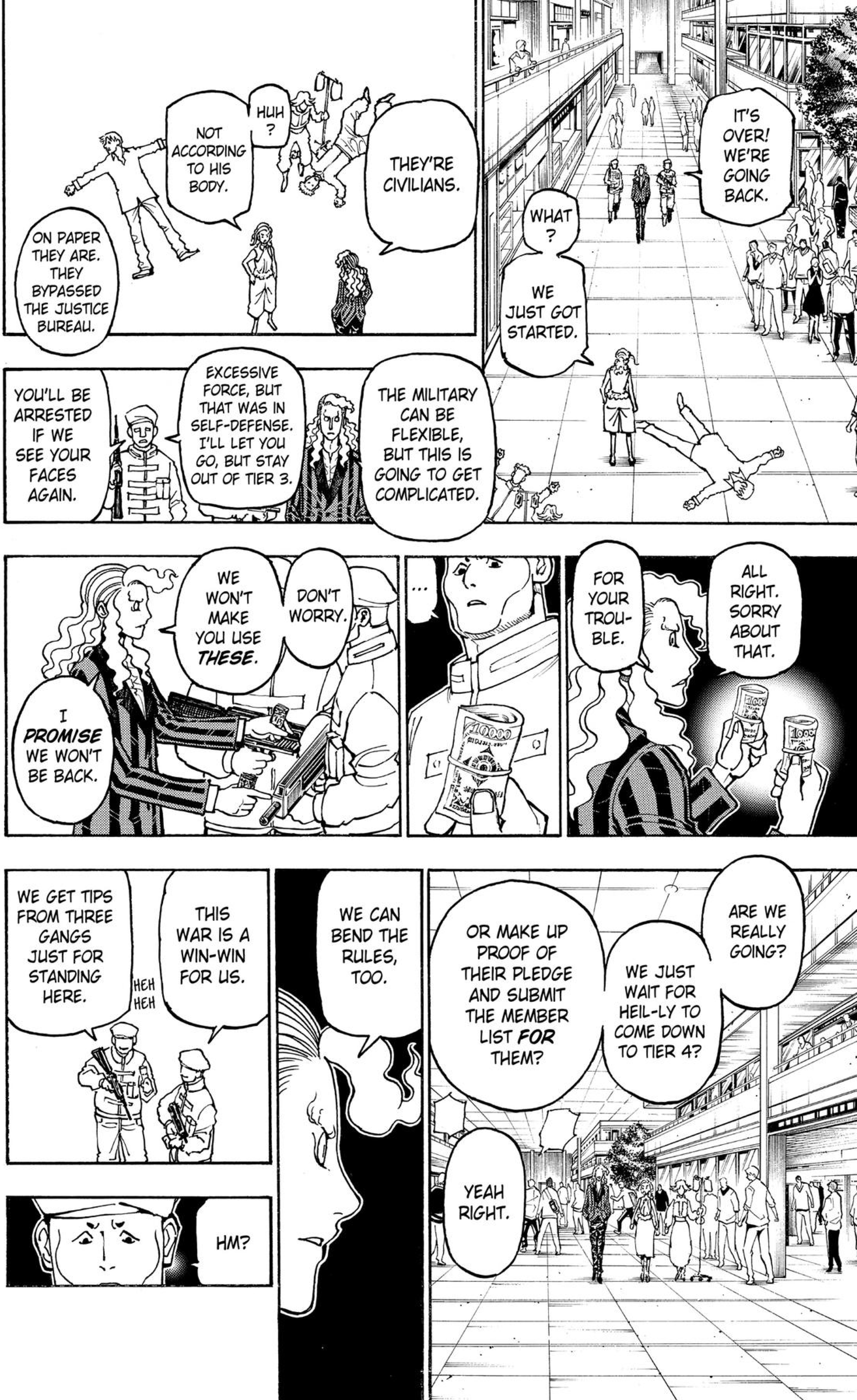

TOO BAD, MR. MAFIA.
THE SOLDIERS CAN TURN A BLIND EYE TO A FIGHT IN THE FOOD COURT FOR FIVE MINUTES TOPS.
IF YOU HURT US CIVILIANS IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, THEY'LL HAVE TO ARREST YOU—EVEN IF THEY'RE IN BED WITH THE MAFIA.
YOU SHOULD RUN, MR. UNDERBOSS.
POWER TO THE PEOPLE. ♡
THEY DIDN'T LIST THEMSELVES ON THE MAFIA MEMBER FILES!
YOUR BOSS BREAKS TOO MANY RULES...
SO THIS KILLING SPREE IS FOR THE SAKE OF FIGHTING ALONE—IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH TURF OR MONEY!!
TELL HER TO BRING IT ON!

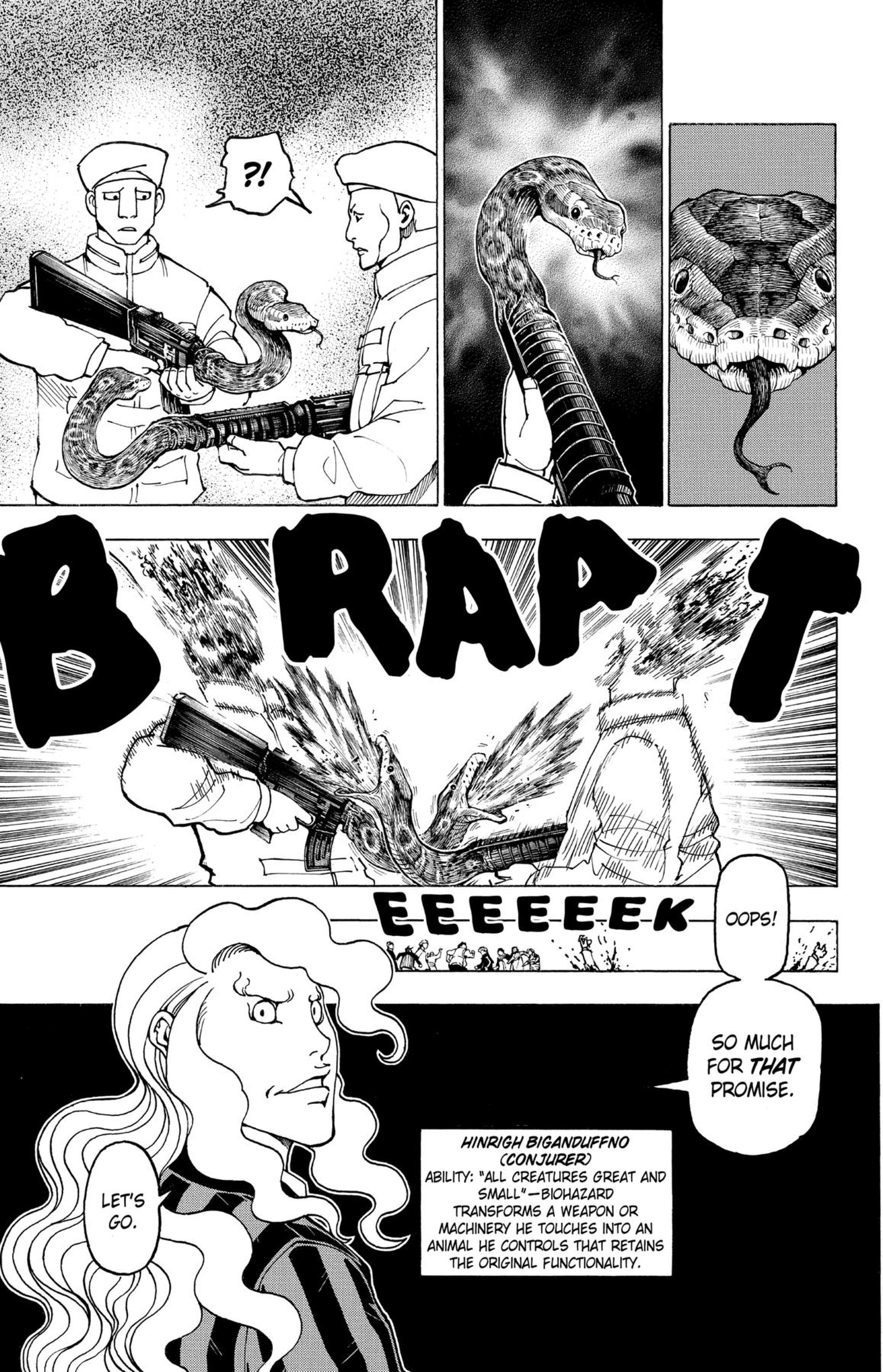

SO.
YOU'RE XI-YU, RIGHT?
KLLK
SHF
YOU ANSWER *MY* QUESTIONS.
SHOULDN'T YOU HELP YOUR FRIEND?
UNH...
?!
VMM
URG...
GAH!
VMM
VMM
VMM
VMM
VMM


!!!
WOOSH
SMASH
GAH ...!
THANKS.
IT TAKES A LOT OF NERVE TO CUT MYSELF.
ZAKURO CUSTARD (MANIPULATOR)
XI-YU MEMBER
ABILITY: "IT'S A BLOODY SMALL WORLD"—BLOODY MARY
MANIPULATES HIS BLOOD AT WILL. THE IV LINE IS BOTH PRACTICAL AND A LIMITATION.


YOU GUYS ARE HEIL-LY?
...
HOW MANY OF YOU ARE THERE TOTAL?
WE'VE GOT 23 PEOPLE!
BOOOFF
WHAT THE?!
A VOICE CAME FROM MY BODY?!
GUH!
BAH!
HOW MANY WITH ABILITIES?
TELL ME WHAT THEY ARE.


DMDMDMDM DM DM
I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY!!
DMDMDM DM
THE BOSS GAVE US ABILITIES, BUT THERE ARE CONDITIONS FOR ACTIVATION!
KILLING PEOPLE INCREASES YOUR LEVEL, YOUR ABILITIES ACTIVATE UPON REACHING LEVEL 21!!
...
THUD
SO WEAK.
YOU DON'T GOT NEN?
HEY, GET UP!
I CAN'T ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU'RE UNCONSCIOUS, MAN!
HMPH!
LYNCH FULLBOKKO (EMITTER)
ABILITY: "MINDFULNESS"— BODY AND SOUL
HITTING THE TARGET AFTER ASKING A QUESTION MAKES THE TARGET'S INNER VOICE RESPOND, WHICH IS NOT AUDIBLE TO OTHERS.


IT'S OVER! WE'RE GOING BACK.
WHAT?
WE JUST GOT STARTED.
THEY'RE CIVILIANS.
HUH?
NOT ACCORDING TO HIS BODY.
ON PAPER THEY ARE. THEY BYPASSED THE JUSTICE BUREAU.
THE MILITARY CAN BE FLEXIBLE, BUT THIS IS GOING TO GET COMPLICATED.
EXCESSIVE FORCE, BUT THAT WAS IN SELF-DEFENSE. I'LL LET YOU GO, BUT STAY OUT OF TIER 3.
YOU'LL BE ARRESTED IF WE SEE YOUR FACES AGAIN.
ALL RIGHT. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
FOR YOUR TROUBLE.
...
DON'T WORRY.
WE WON'T MAKE YOU USE *THESE*.
I *PROMISE* WE WON'T BE BACK.
ARE WE REALLY GOING?
WE JUST WAIT FOR HEIL-LY TO COME DOWN TO TIER 4?
OR MAKE UP PROOF OF THEIR PLEDGE AND SUBMIT THE MEMBER LIST *FOR* THEM?
YEAH RIGHT.
WE CAN BEND THE RULES, TOO.
THIS WAR IS A WIN-WIN FOR US.
WE GET TIPS FROM THREE GANGS JUST FOR STANDING HERE.
HEH HEH
HM?


?!
BRAPT
EEEEEEK
OOPS!
SO MUCH FOR *THAT* PROMISE.
HINRIGH BIGANDUFFNO (CONJURER)
ABILITY: "ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL"—BIOHAZARD
TRANSFORMS A WEAPON OR MACHINERY HE TOUCHES INTO AN ANIMAL HE CONTROLS THAT RETAINS THE ORIGINAL FUNCTIONALITY.
LET'S GO.

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SHONEN
JUMP

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